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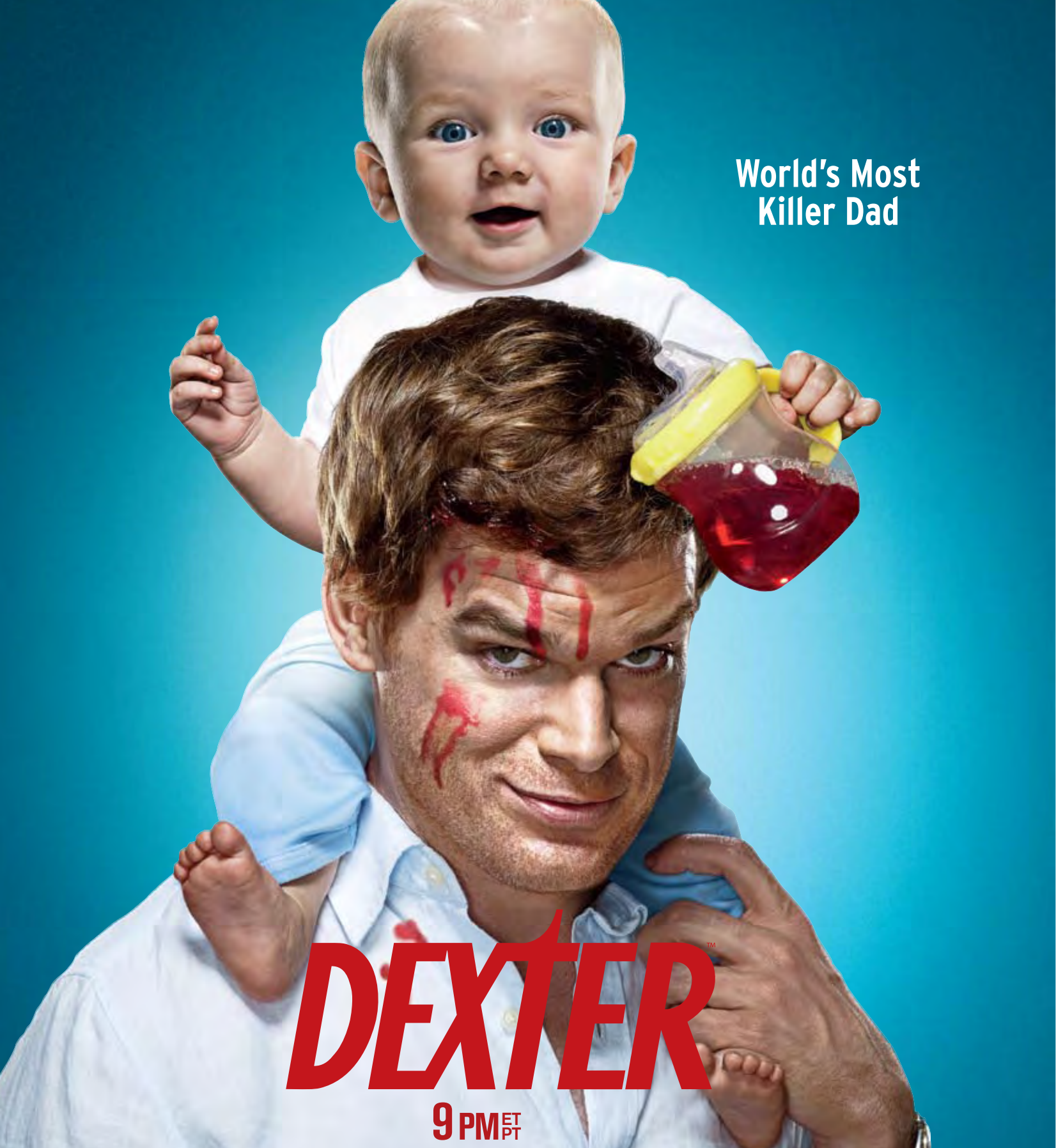
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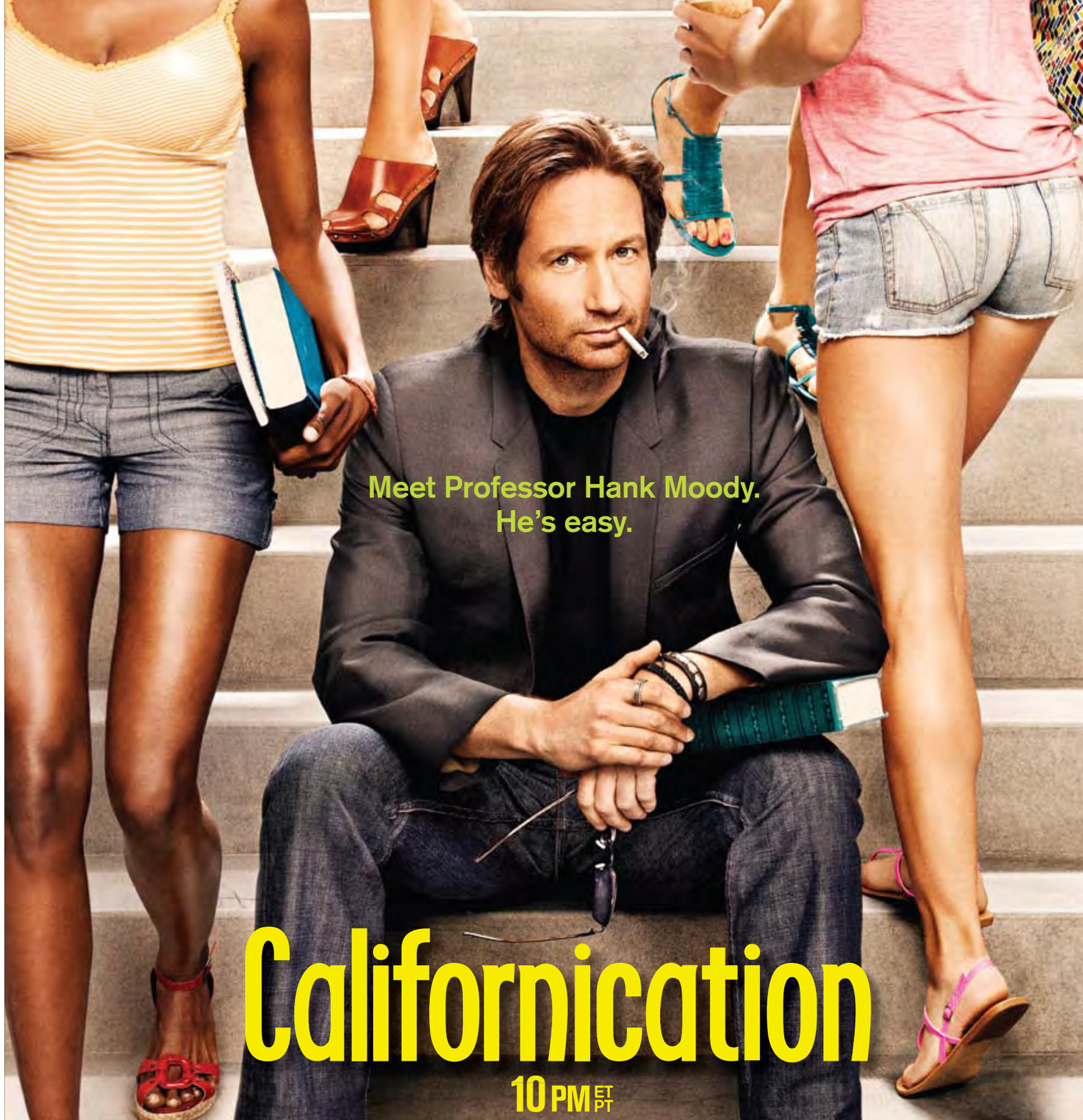
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PHOTO BY SHAWN BRACKBILL



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## ED'S RANT WOT U CALL IT?



MAYHEM AT RINSE FM'S 15TH BIRTHDAY PARTY AT MATTER, LONDON

### **SO, WE'RE NEARING 2010 AND IT LOOKS LIKE WE'VE HIT THAT INEVITABLE MOMENT WHEN IT ALL FALLS APART:**

Just when it seems like a sound has cemented itself in our hearts and minds—in this case, U.K. funky—it goes and crossbreeds, and leaves us grasping, gasping, guessing, and wagging our tongues. Rinse FM honcho Geeneus calls the new sound “funkstep” (and then later calls it “dubbage”), but whatever name people are bandying about, it's obvious the London underground's next batch of DJs and producers—spearheaded by the likes of Geeneus, cover girl Cooly G, and Roska—are taking whatever we briefly thought was “funky”—mixed with their combined love for dubstep, 2-step, garridge, experimental, and house—in ridiculously exciting new directions.

As Seattle-based writer Brandon Ivers found out over eight time zones, U.K. funky has already splintered into numerous unique strands, right as the dance world was beginning to warm back up to diva vocals and bottle-popping bongo fests. And when Cooly G is making tracks with dubstep fringe-dweller Scratcha DVA, you know that big, weird, amazing things are just on the horizon—so really, who cares what we call it?

That new-found experimentalism for club sounds, of course, knows no geographic borders. Over on our side of the pond, Rob Geary checked in with New York's FaltyDL, where he upped the ante with his latest record for Planet Mu, and also took just about every post-1990 style of dance music and threw them into the pot. The result? A super-heady, often-danceable concoction that's got our attention probably more than any U.S. producer has in a while. And for your viewing pleasure, check out his appearance on *XLR8R TV* to see the other side of this kid's mad production skills—sushi making!

FaltyDL's speaker-blowin' neighbors a couple hours west, street-bass originators Dev79 and Starkey, set the scene for this issue's special city feature on Philadelphia (where interviewer Ben Zoltowski gets personal with the pair about their label conglomerate and how dubstep has infiltrated the U.S.). As we have for so many years in the past, this fall we went deep into the City of Liberty in search of its best artists and finest spots to dance, eat, drink, look, shop, and live. The sunny fellows in A Sunny Day in Glasgow give us a virtual tour of Philly's record shops over at *XLR8R.com*, while writer Josiah Hughes surveys West Philly's punk paradise. Of course, no trip to Philadelphia would be complete without a look at Diplo's Mad Decent empire, so we sent photographer Josh Sisk to capture the label's second annual block party, where folks like Maluca, PoPo, and DJ Sega (who we feature on page 52) brought the humidity-soaked revelry.

Elsewhere, we go into the studio with Chicago jakbeat enthusiast Traxx, get a primer on Amsterdam's beat scene with Tom Trago, and Seattle's Lusine gives us production novices a few tips just prior to his upcoming Decibel Festival performance. So keep your eyes on *XLR8R.com* for a dispatch from that gathering's sixth anniversary, where we'll be sure to have more of those confounding and beautiful experiences that inspire a hell of a lot more than just new genre names.

—Ken Taylor, Editor

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Cooly G, shot in London by Shaun Bloodworth

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BRANDON BUSSOLINI



Brandon Bussolini is a freelance writer, barista, and intern living in Oakland, California. He writes about music for *Dusted Magazine*, the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. If his future work schedule allows for more than one day off per week, he will use the time for drawing and reading Curtis Roads' *Computer Music Tutorial*. He hopes no one will beat him to the punch on writing the 33 1/3 book on Talk Talk's *Laughing Stock*.

SHAUN BLOODWORTH



Shaun Bloodworth's love of electronic music started on a school trip to Germany in 1981 when he bought *Computer World* by Kraftwerk. It wasn't until 2005, though, during a chance collaboration with GiveUpArt, where he was given the chance to photograph Skream for his upcoming CD cover, that the music side of his photography was born. Since then, Bloodworth has documented the U.K. dubstep and electronic scene extensively. He shot this issue's London underground cover feature. [shaunbloodworth.com](http://shaunbloodworth.com)

SHAWN BRACKBILL



Shawn Brackbill is a fashion and music photographer based in Brooklyn, NY. His work has been published in *Mojo* and *Dazed and Confused*, and he shot RCRD LBL's Peter Rojas for last year's Labels We Love issue of *XLR8R*. For this issue, he photographed almost all the artists and places in our Philadelphia feature, revisiting the city in which he used to reside. Coincidentally, he had an exhibit hanging at Space 1026 gallery at the time of the shoot. [shawnbrackbill.com](http://shawnbrackbill.com)

SHAWN REYNALDO



About a decade ago, Bay Area native and current *XLR8R* Managing Editor Shawn Reynaldo ditched a promising career in, well, anything but the music industry so he could spend his days running college radio stations, DJing at "cool" parties, and launching fledgling labels like Double Negative Records and Bersa Discos. "Disco Shawn" also lived in Buenos Aires for a little while and still won't shut up about it, even though he's been back in San Francisco for nearly two years.

XLR8R

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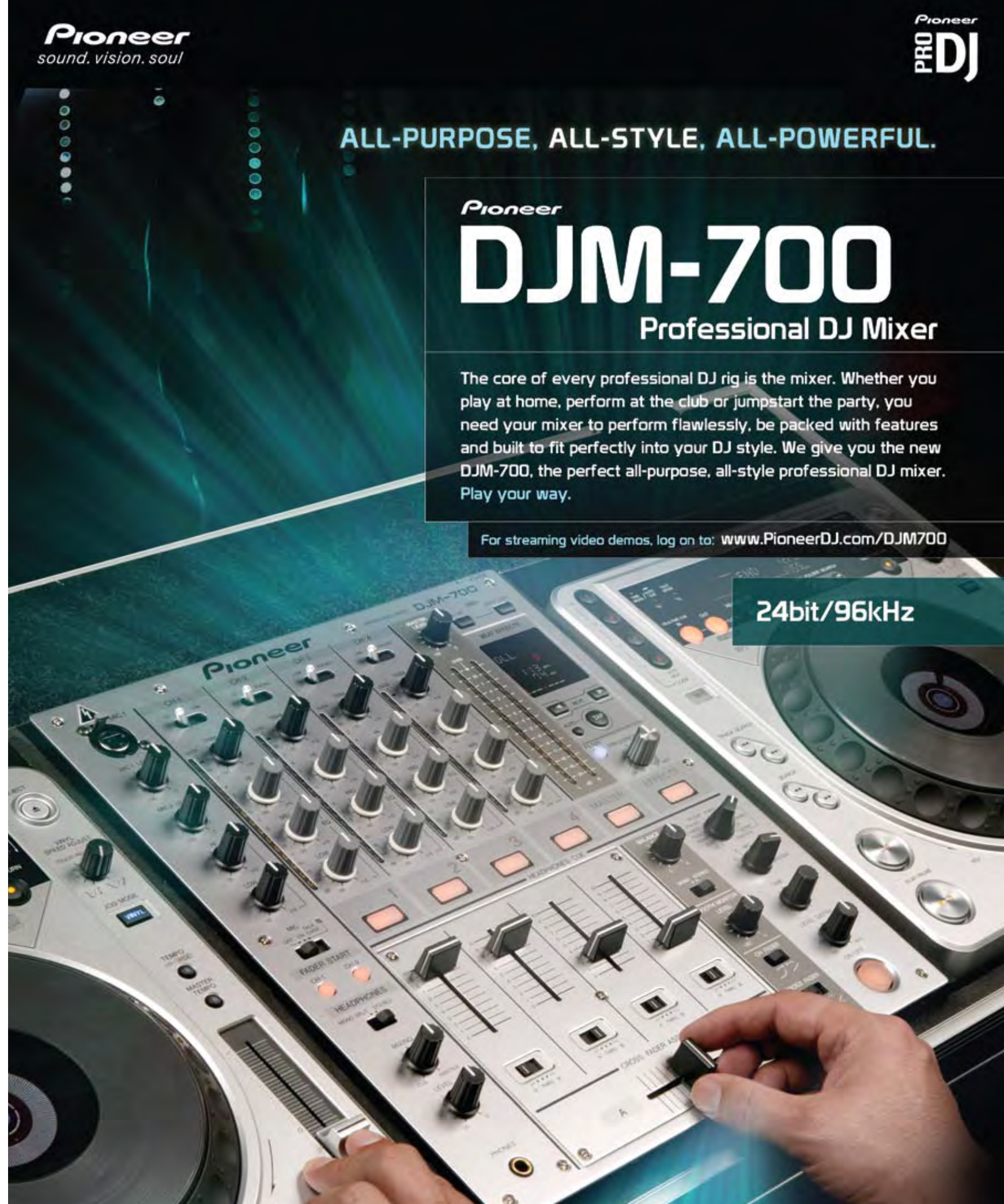
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## XLR8R TV

FALTYDL & DELOREAN



To augment this month's Audiofile on prolific NYC-based future-garage hero **FaltyDL**, we got Drew Lustman in front of the camera and behind the sushi counter of *XLR8R*'s kitchen where he chopped, sliced, and rolled us some tasty Atlantic rolls while chatting about his own process of chopping up the beats that comprise his beautifully busted breakbeat-based records for Planet Mu. As well, while over in Europe for the Øya Festival, we stopped in to Barcelona and paid a visit with newcomers **Delorean**, who showed us around their favorite local spots while downing delicious Spanish horchata.

See all the madness at [XLR8R.com/tv](http://XLR8R.com/tv), and come back every Tuesday for new episodes, including recent shows with **Nate Boyce** and **Christopher Willits**.

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## PODCAST



### LABELS WE LOVE, UNTOLD, & MOVE D

September sees *XLR8R.com*'s podcast section serving up sweet sets from the likes of next-level dubstepper **Untold** and German house legend **Move D**. Also download a slew of mixes from some of our celebrated Labels We Love, including Type (selected by **Xela**), Diynamic (mixed by **Stimming**), **Wireblock**, and Modern Love (mixed by **MLZ**).

Get your dose of can't-miss hotness and subscribe to our weekly podcast at [XLR8R.com](http://XLR8R.com), where we feature exclusive mixes from all across the spectrum, including new sets from **Brackles** and **Brennan Green**.

[XLR8R.COM/PODCAST](http://XLR8R.COM/PODCAST)



AUGUST  
NO.128

Exclusive podcasts from the Type, Wireblock, Modern Love and Diynamic labels

Interview excerpts with Malen Solomun, Sebo K, and Durrty Goodz

Labels We Love extra features from Slumberland, No Hats No Hoods, and Cómeme

[XLR8R.COM/128EXTRAS](http://XLR8R.COM/128EXTRAS)



JUNE/JULY  
NO.127

*XLR8R TV* does Montreal with Ghislain Poirier

Outtakes from Party Out of Bounds city tours

An *XLR8R TV* episode with Labtekwn

A collection of definitive skwee tracks

[XLR8R.COM/127EXTRAS](http://XLR8R.COM/127EXTRAS)



LOOK FOR THE XLR8R.COM EXTRAS ICON

This issue is filled with online extras, including extended interviews, photo outtakes, audio clips, and videos. See them at [XLR8R.COM/129EXTRAS](http://XLR8R.COM/129EXTRAS)



Entries will be accepted via standard mail and email, and must be received by November 1, 2009. Send your entry to: *XLR8R*'s Brotherly Love Contest, 3180 18th St. #207, San Francisco, CA 94110 or email [contest@xlr8r.com](mailto:contest@xlr8r.com) with "*XLR8R*'s Brotherly Love Contest" in the subject line.

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## XLR8R'S "BROTHERLY LOVE" CONTEST

Scoop up some of the best music that Philadelphia has to offer.

From Germantown to Queen's Village to Kensington, Philly is rising once again as a major city for hot music, as is evidenced by the issue of *XLR8R* you're reading right now. But how much do you know about the City of Brotherly Love's colorful musical past? Gamble & Huff built a disco empire, Hall & Oates proved that white dudes can make good soul music, and Josh Wink brought the rave world to a higher state of consciousness—and trust us when we say we're leaving out a lot of other legends and pioneers. For this month's contest, we want you to tell us about one of your favorite Philly artists of the past and why their music is so important to you (in under 200 words). For your efforts, we're kicking

down a slew of Philly's best music, including A Sunny Day in Glasgow's *Ashes Grammar* (Mis Ojos Discos), Cold Cave's *Cremations* (Hospital Productions), RJD2's first three albums (RJD2's Electrical Connections), and grab bags from both Seclusiasis and Mad Decent featuring a slew of CDs, vinyl, and t-shirts. The best answers will win the following prizes.

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# FALTYDL



PHOTO: KEN TAYLOR

WORDS: ROB GEARY

NEW YORK'S ADDITION TO THE EXPERIMENTAL DUBSTEP MASSIVE ROCKS IT QUIETLY.

**PERSISTENCE CAN BE A GOOD THING, AS FALTYDL CAN TELL YOU.** Known off wax as Drew Lustman, FaltyDL's sound—which blends skittish but groove-tight 2-step beats, wobbly synth pads, and a strong sense of melody—harkens back to the moment when the IDM nerds raided jungle for ideas, but it also sports the clarity of modern production and a sharp knack for compositional space and atmospherics. A New Haven, Connecticut native, Lustman left the Elm City for New York and now burrows deep in the East Village, where he experiments restlessly, his sound scientist's ear always finding that particular wobble of a bassline, that perfect timbre of a vocal sample. "I rock it quietly," as Lustman puts it, constantly tinkering in the glow of a new iMac.

If it weren't for that persistence, we wouldn't have Lustman's debut LP, *Love is a Liability*. The Planet Mu label's Mike Paradinas, whose work as  $\mu$ -ziq is an obvious predecessor of FaltyDL, initially turned a deaf ear toward Lustman's first tracks. "I sent Mike loads of tracks a few years ago and he wasn't into them until I sent him 'Human Meadow,'" he recalls. "He said it was cool and we went forward. A single turned into an EP, which grew into an album, and so on and so forth."

It's easy to see what grabbed Paradinas about "Human Meadow." The track opens *Love is a Liability* with a squeaky, tinny beat pitched just north of jungle, until a classic U.K. garage-style bassline tromps in, propelling the track forward into matched male and female samples stitched together to complete the phrase "I want your love/Forever." In another life, a few BPMs slower and with live singers, it could be a classic house track; amp up the noise and it would slot in right next to Aphex Twin's mid-'90s assault on drum and bass.

But if anything, "Human Meadow" is the iciest track here; "Dionysus," "To New York," and "Truth" add in knotty, wistful synths from Orbital's e-fueled playbook, and straighter, mostly danceable beats (the vintage pin-ups on *Love's* striking cover art by ASI could easily get down to this). That combination of easy appeal and brainy structures was hard-won, though, by Lustman's largely disowned attempts at straight-up jungle. "I think my sloppiness as a producer is still similar now to when I was making jungle," he says. "The snare would land somewhere between the one and four [beats], and wherever it found itself was okay." In the regulation drum and bass world, that wouldn't fly, but, he says, "in garage I found this shuffle that allowed me to continue that."

• FaltyDL's *Bravery* is out in October on Planet Mu. [faltydl.com](http://faltydl.com)







# UNDER THE COVERS

A NEW SOUL JAZZ COVER-ART RETROSPECTIVE TRACES THE VISUAL ROOTS OF '60S FREE-JAZZ RADICALISM.



**FREEDOM, RHYTHM AND SOUND: REVOLUTIONARY JAZZ COVER ART 1965-83** (SJR Publishing; hardcover; \$39.99), a stunning retrospective of jazz cover art, is about much more than cool-ass graphics, though, that is undeniably a vast part of its appeal. Curators Stuart Baker and Gilles Peterson trace a potent history of “deep, spiritual, Afrocentric radical artists, and musicians,” pointedly locating their sonic and visual work alongside the actions of momentous political figures such as Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, groundbreaking legislation like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (which prohibited racial segregation in schools, public places, and employment) and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (which outlawed discriminatory voting practices), and even the first manned space mission.

Frequently undocumented, the records of this period present, says Soul Jazz Records founder Baker, “not only a historical archive but also a fascinating display of DIY culture created by a

mixture of associations, collectives, individual musicians, and entrepreneurs all determined that their radical music be heard on their own terms.”

On records like Steve Reid’s *Odyssey of the Oblong Square* and Phil Ranelin’s *Vibes from the Tribe*, the “outness” of early-’60s free jazz was juxtaposed with the sensibilities of mid-’60s black power and civil rights to forge a radical new music that Peterson now perceives as “as a kind of pre-punk,” with Sun Ra as its Malcolm McLaren figure (though one must wonder if this does the Afro-futurist bandleader a disservice).

Pre-empting punk’s do-it-yourself aesthetic, these short-run records were frequently packaged in naive, starkly monochromatic sleeves (for reasons of economy) with simple, direct typesetting: the African-American Jazz Ensemble packaged their *Malcolm X College* in a black-and-white snap of the eponymous place of learning; New Life’s *Visions of the Third Eye* (which is appropriated as the collection’s front cover) deploys a simple-but-effective single

color-block graphic; Marcus Belgrave’s *Gemini* loses nothing for being packaged in the most uncomplicated of etchings.

But what relevance do such sleeves have in 2009? Why publish a book on old jazz cover art now? “I’m not sure,” admits Baker. “I wasn’t conscious of this while we were putting the book together but once I start to analyze it, the election of Barack Obama seems like a final destination in the path of many of the artists of this period. I hope people will use the book to fire their imagination.”

For Peterson, the justification is aesthetic: “It looks so good! In this world of easy downloads with no soul, this book can act as a guide.”

Happily, a companion CD is to follow. “The artwork is a true representation of the music,” explains Baker. “For me, the best covers do seem to go with the best music.” *David Hemingway*

[SOULJAZZRECORDS.CO.UK](http://SOULJAZZRECORDS.CO.UK)



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# TOM TRAGO

THE AMSTERDAM SOUND HAS AN OPEN-MINDED NEW GUIDE.



**BERLIN HAS MINIMAL TECHNO, OSLO TRADES IN SPACE DISCO, AND PARIS PATENTED THE FRENCH TOUCH HOUSE SOUND.** But what can the Dutch lay claim to in electronic music, now that the pounding thumps of gabber techno have quieted? If you ask 26-year-old Amsterdam resident Tom Trago, his city is an electronic music crossroads where jazz, soul, and funk mingle with Detroit techno, Chicago house, and even Fly Lo-style beats. "It's the sound of combining things together," he says over Skype from his apartment. For the past three years, Trago has represented that fusion via releases on his hometown's Rush Hour and Kindred Spirits labels.

A former hip-hop DJ, Trago put himself on the map with 2007's wonky *Fluor Green* EP (Kindred Spirits) and appearances on DJ Cinnaman's and Jay Scarlett's *Beat Dimensions* compilations. His Dabyre- and Prefuse-style dirty hip-hop tracks "Alle Jezus" and "Mthfrkr" caught the attention of tastemakers

from London to L.A., and soon the 'Dam became a beat-head hotbed. "Amsterdam has really changed in the past five years," says Trago. "DJs started playing broken beat, funk, and disco and combining it with hip-hop. From that hybrid sound I discovered house and techno."

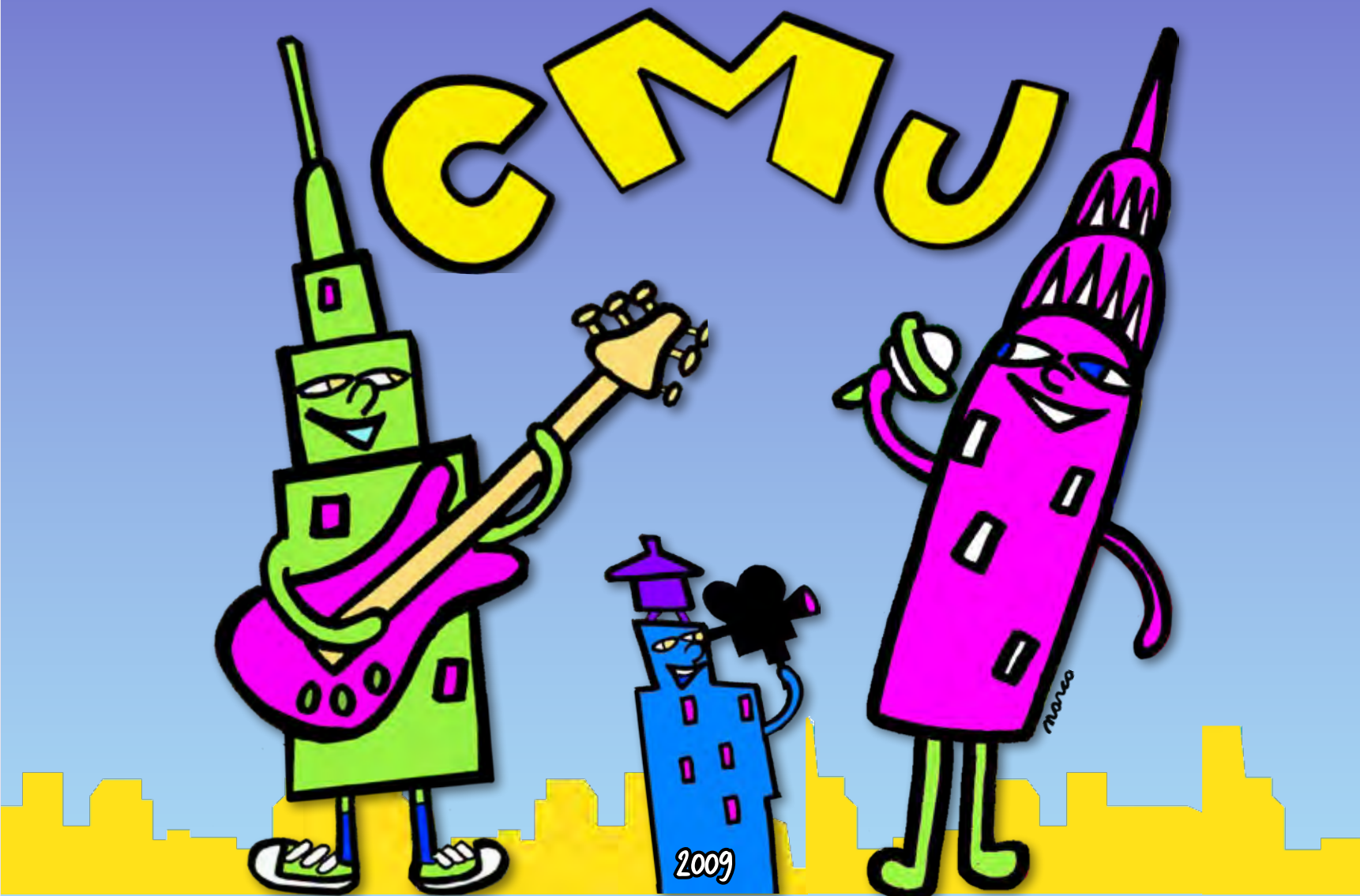
He transitioned from the "sloppy hip-hop" of his *Fluor Green* era to making soulful house tracks inspired by U.S. producers Ron Trent, Theo Parrish, and Moodymann. That led to his phenomenal '09 album, *Voyage Direct*, which incorporates MPC and SP1200 sampling techniques refined from his hip-hop days with moody synths and smooth, layered arrangements. The album was borne of his new-found love for house and disco, but also served a practical aim; Trago's downtempo material was not well suited to his frequent club DJ sets, so he switched to making danceable beats that were "still a bit experimental."

There's an interesting artistic tension in Trago's music that comes from his still-developing palette. He's no Euro-techno hack recycling his hit sound over and over. "I'm really looking for who I am inside," he admits. "I do that by discovering music, and finding out what I like and what I don't like." *Voyage Direct* tracks like "Use Me" and "Lost in the Streets of New York" illustrate that journey with simple melodies and mysterious loops.

He recently paired with former flatmate Cinnaman in the purely techno project YuroTrago and started a live new-wave band with friend San Proper. There's also plans to set up his own label and release white-label disco edits on Moxie, while *Voyage Direct Part II* is set for release in 2010. That might sound like a lot of work, but Trago takes a different attitude toward his projects. "I try and have fun and see what I'm good at," he says, adding dryly, "Always try something new, because doing new stuff is fun!"

• *Voyage Direct* is out now on Rush Hour. [myspace.com/tomtrago](http://myspace.com/tomtrago)

WORDS TOMAS PALERMO PHOTO BRAM SPAAN



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# OAK

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**SOMEWHERE BETWEEN GRACE JONES, VINTAGE CALVIN KLEIN, AND BACKWOODS**

**BIKER BARS** lies the street-meets-high fashion designs of NYC boutique/clothing line OAK. In their six years as a storefront and in-house design team, co-creators Jeff Madalena and Louis Terline have remained true to their style ideals since opening their first store, the women's-only Canary. "The concept was simple," explains OAK's designer Kristopher Whitman. "To bring a knowledge of fashion to an unpretentious retail setting. We believe fashion is about being informed, obtainable, easy, and a mix between classic designers and up-and-coming talent." After expanding to a shop across the way from Canary's Bond Street locale, the team started OAK, an exclusively men's store, and eventually opened a second location on 8th Street in Brooklyn featuring lines for both genders. "New York is in constant flux and we represent that in our stores—the way they're built (we change parts of the build-out every season), as well as the merchandise we carry," says senior buyer Thomas Mathew. "Plus, we work with materials that we feel are rooted in New York fashion—denim, jersey, and leather, and almost everything we carry comes in black." Here are a few of OAK's fall offerings. *Patric Fallon*

[oaknyc.com](http://oaknyc.com)



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**TORQUE TEE (\$52)**

We've experimented with not-so-basic basics and this was a hit, so we brought it back for fall—super-soft with a slight cowl neck and cut against the grain with a curved, unfinished hem.

**BLACK SLOUCH HOODIE (\$92)**

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# JNEIRO JAREL

A NOMADIC HIP-HOP HEAD KEEPS IT FLUID IN VIBERIA.



**PRODUCER/MC JNEIRO JAREL PREFERS NOT TO CALL ANY ONE CITY HIS OWN.**

Not wanting to fall into hip-hop's territorial obsession, Jarel is more concerned with pushing his various leftfield projects forward than claiming certain area codes. "The thing about me, I always brought my vibe anywhere that I go," he explains. "That's why you can't really put a finger on where I'm from. I call it a Viberian vibe—this is my own world."

While mentally chilling in the sonic utopia of Viberia, Jneiro now physically lives in L.A. The recent move out west from his longtime residence in Philly was made partially to be in closer proximity to his friends and collaborators Flying Lotus, Daedelus, and others from L.A.'s bubbling beat community. With Jarel, though, no move is permanent. "I'm in Cali for a minute, but I'm still Philly, though. You know how it is—I'm everywhere."

After growing up across the country, Jarel began sharpening his MC skills in Houston and then moved on to Atlanta, back to his hometown of NYC, and then to Philly in 2004. And it was there that he ultimately began to make noise as a MC and producer. Thanks to a push from Philly selector Rich Medina, Jneiro opted not to let his financial troubles on the East Coast get the best of him. "I was gonna go to Texas and then eventually come back to New York, but I went to Philly, met King Britt, met Bahamadia, and hung out with all these Philly legends."

Living in PA amongst established greats, though, Jarel didn't follow in anyone's footsteps. Instead, he began letting loose in the studio, and recording projects under different aliases like Dr. Who Dat? But in 2007 he pushed his creativity a step further with his debut as Shape of Broad Minds, a

group made up of four of his aliases and one actual rhymer, Jawwaad. Approaching this project from so many angles allowed for a raw assortment of cosmic boom-bap, jazzy broken beats, and a little Brazilian funk.

Jarel made no less of an impression on his collaboration with Goodie Mob MC Kuhjo, called Willie Isz. The duo's 2009 debut, *Georgiavania*, evoked listeners to re-think their impressions of Jarel and Khujo with this self-dubbed "digestible but still different" LP.

Staying in tune with his rapidly shifting sonic vision, his recent collaborations include remixes for Doom, a song with Dave Sitek from TV on the Radio, and tracks with fellow shape-shifting act Blu. No matter the locale, Jarel strives to not repeat himself. "I'm all about reinventing for my own personal stimulation [and] for my audience," he says. "I feel like a lot of my audience gets that now."

• Willie Isz's *Georgiavania* is out now on Lex. [myspace.com/jneirojarel](http://myspace.com/jneirojarel)

PHOTO SHAWN BRACKBILL WORDS MAX HERMAN



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# IN MY HOUSE QUINTRON & MISS PUSSYCAT

THE PIONEERS OF "SWAMP TECH" SHOW US THE MAGICAL TALISMANS OF THEIR NEW ORLEANS HIDEAWAY,  
THE SPELLCASTER LODGE.

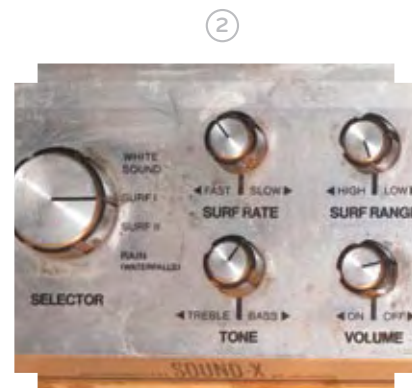


**1 THE BOAT BAR (1)**

Miss Pussycat and I have spent many happy hours drinking and thinking alone at this special basement bar. Our dear friend Julien found this abandoned by the railroad tracks and a bunch of us went out at 4 a.m., loaded it onto a truck, and brought it to the Spellcaster Lodge. We had to actually remove the back wall of the house to get it in! Someone spent a ton of time working on this amazing nautical-themed bar—all of the chrome you see is real boat hardware and the upholstery is super-rugged. I keep waiting for some old pirate man to walk into one of our parties and say, "Hey, I built that and I want it back!" The boat bar is also equipped with a noise machine (2) that electronically recreates the sound of the ocean tides!

**3 J.R. EWING STATUE (3)**

I keep this 14-inch-tall statue of J.R. Ewing next to the computer for business inspiration. Much of the writing for *Dallas* was absolutely brilliant, but the character of J.R. (and Larry Hagman's portrayal) was the series' enduring masterpiece. Although I would not endorse cheating on your wife (with her sister!) or going behind your father's back to sell his special hill to some evil oil-drilling dudes, I do feel some kind of kinship with this misunderstood man. This little statue includes a removable cowboy hat so you can fill his body with liquor, and behind him sits an oil well jutting out of a ceramic stack of hundred-dollar bills. The best thing? Turn his body upside down and wind up the built-in music box!



**2**



**3**



**5**

**4 BEN HECHT BOOKS (4)**

Hecht had a great career writing for Hollywood (*Gone With the Wind*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Notorious*), but it was his sinister, decadent short stories and novels that were his true art. Any fan of Oscar Wilde, Baudelaire, or Bukowski needs to check out Hecht's books, especially *Erik Dorn* or *Fantazius Mallare*. The latter was so shocking at the time of its initial printing in 1922 that it was suppressed until 1978. Hecht's writing is so weird and floral that you can almost smell what he is saying on the page. A few of the books in this pile are first editions—they are real special to me, even though they are falling apart.



**4**

**5 STREET-SWEEPING BRUSH (5)**

This brush was used to clean the streets after Hurricane Katrina. My friend Stevie and I drunkenly toted this into a van in the wee hours. This was at a time just post-Katrina when there were really no laws—as long as you were wearing a bright orange vest and a hard hat nobody asked any questions. To me, this object represents the kind of crazy nights you can have in New Orleans. Sometimes we have to make our own fun here because, let's face it, the center of wealth and culture we are not. I was just reminded that we went on this adventure to get away from some annoying guy who wanted to have the cliché, whiskey-soaked "What happens when you die?" conversation. Ugh! NOTHING happens when you die, so do something right now... like steal a giant blue brush, dum-dum!



**6**

**6 THE DRUM BUDDY (6)**

This is an instrument of my own invention—basically, a very refined analog synthesizer controlled by light. The can spins around, releasing holes of light into the little colored pipes, which trigger my specially designed Drum Buddy sounds! I have one I play on tour and one that sits on our mantle in the living room so we can run the TV sound through it. Although Drum Buddy has gained a lot of notoriety via a few celeb owners, (Laurie Anderson, Nels Cline, almost Kanye West), in our home it's kind of like another roommate, or a pet or mascot. The Drum Buddy has actually become a big inspiration for a few of Miss Pussycat's fashion creations. I think she is trying to compete with the Lacoste alligator.

quintronandmisspussycat.com, drumbuddy.com



# BRENNAN GREEN

DISCO-HOUSE MUTATIONS FROM A BROOKLYN-VIA-TORONTO ARTHUR RUSSELL OBSESSIVE.



**BRENNAN GREEN'S LATEST SINGLE,** "My First House," actually sat on his shelf for 12 years before it was released. It was the first track that the Brooklyn-via-Toronto producer crafted after selling his guitar and buying an old Roland sequencer. "You can imagine what I've learned since then," he says with a laugh.

"My First House" hovers in a traffic jam where Norwegian space-disco harmonies float like Northern Lights above a hypnotic, stylus-scraped groove straight from the basement. Every now and then, a classic snare roll reminiscent of countless '90s house tunes carries the music forward. "I didn't want it to be a nostalgic tune," Green comments. "I wanted it to have some balls—to be able to stand up and say, 'I'm from back then, but you can still hear me loud and clear.'"

Before moving to New York a decade ago, Green started DJing around Toronto, where he enjoyed being caught in the middle of Detroit's, Chicago's, and New York's house scenes. But once he ended up in NYC, he soon felt the sting of Mayor Giuliani's anti-

dancing policies. Rather than put up too much of a fight, he took his sets abroad to Japan, Australia, and Scandinavia, where he really began to earn his stripes. "I started playing in proper clubs where people are up for it, screaming, staying all night, and just being super, super into it," Green recalls. "It's sort of hard to get that out of New York these days."

Green essentially dwells in underground disco, where experimentalism runs rampant and Carter-era kitsch never seems to surface. He's remixed the likes of space-disco maven Lindström, NYC avant-funk icons Liquid Liquid, and bump 'n' grinders Crazy Penis, and his meticulously placed synth melodies most often recall the hand of comrade and nu-disco mastermind Daniel Wang. Like Wang, Green strives to create the "voice" of a song, pointing to the lack of memorable melodies he hears in house. "I have floor-to-ceiling [house] records in my apartment that I've been buying forever," Green says. "I'm sure there are only a handful that I can hum or whistle to you."

But for the self-described "dancing fool,"

disco is a much more open field. "I just think of disco as being live and experimental, where you're taking any influence and putting it to a dance beat," he says. "You can't make disco exclusively on a computer—you really need to have people playing off each other at some point in the recording for it to be disco." Arthur's Landing, a tribute band that pays homage to late NYC cellist/avant-disco icon Arthur Russell, recorded a jam of his dancefloor masterwork, Loose Joints' "Is It All Over My Face," in Green's tiny Brooklyn apartment. The result will end up on a future single on Green's Chinatown label. "It's so organic and so amazing to hear these guys play off of each other," he says. "It doesn't really need that much editing."

Asked if a solo album is coming soon, Green quickly replies: "I keep telling people that. I'm trying to, man. I have it in my head; I got three or four ideas for three different albums and I just have to get around to doing it!"

\* Brennan Green's *My First House* EP is out now on Wurst Music. [myspace.com/chinatown](http://myspace.com/chinatown)

WORDS: CAMERON MACDONALD

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FIVE STAR  
**BODYCODE**

SOUTH AFRICAN HOUSE PRODUCER BODYCODE (A.K.A. ALAN ABRAHAMS)  
ON **FIVE BOOKS** THAT INFLUENCED HIS LATEST LP, *IMMUNE*.

STEPHEN BAXTER  
**DESTINY'S CHILDREN**  
**BOOKS 1 TO 4** (Del Ray)

This is a series of books that spans time, from the distant past into the distant future. In medieval times, a woman starts a women-only community, which gradually becomes a cult and later a race all its own. In another story, man travels to the farthest reaches of the galaxy. I like the feeling of being stuck in the author's world across many time frames; in a sense I try to interpret this feeling into my music—the sense of travel through the ages.

SIRI HUSTVEDT  
**WHAT I LOVED** (Picador)

*What I Loved* deals with the pain of loss in a very mature and inspiring way. The author writes in a way that really makes you feel, "Hey, I've been through that." Feeling the most basic of human emotions, often neglected in today's speedily produced tracks... I tried to inject that into *Immune*.

GREG EGAN  
**LUMINOUS** (Gollancz)

*Luminous* is a collection of short stories by one of my favorite authors. He often deals with the near future, taking in developments in science that are happening now but expanding on them. In one story, an intergalactic race downloads its civilization onto the internet. Egan really transports you. I was attempting to do the same with this album, still taking into account the sound and feeling that's currently happening but transplanting it into a future world.

HARUKI MURAKAMI  
**A WILD SHEEP CHASE**  
(Vintage International)

A curious little book into whose life I was deeply sucked! It tells the tale of a man who needs to find a sheep he used in a photo or his life will be destroyed. It was important to me, as some of its themes dealt with isolation and the world within one's head, a theme I conjure throughout *Immune*.



ARTHUR C. CLARKE AND STEPHEN BAXTER **TIME'S EYE** (Del Ray)

A collaboration between two of the brightest minds in science fiction, and with each page they never fail to enthrall. Again, the theme here is time travel and dilation, and once again this theme is wrapped up in *Immune*. Like books, music has this ability to transport the listener or reader to alternate realms of space and time.

• [Bodycode's Immune is out now on Ghostly International.](#)  
[myspace.com/bodycodemusic](#)

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4 **Super black flat-top Wayfarers** (\$150)  
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# Mutant Funk

COOLY G,  
GENEUS, AND  
ROSKA TAKE  
U.K. FUNKY AND  
DUBSTEP BACK  
TO THE LAB.

WORDS BRANDON IVERS PHOTOS SHAUN BLOODWORTH







●  
“This 'funky' thing, it'll be over in a minute.  
You can only say something is new once.”

If anyone has witnessed a genre come and go, it's Geeneus. The 30-year-old boss of London's most influential pirate radio station, Rinse FM, Geeneus started broadcasting 15 years ago with guys like Wiley and Slimzee. They played strictly jungle back then; however, Geeneus is a self-professed “new thing addict” these days. He's seen the arc of U.K. urban music burn through jungle, garage, and grime.

“The funky thing came about because girls had stopped dancing in clubs—[grime] was more of a show thing,” says Geeneus. “So people could just dance again, you know? It was 70% females. And now it's gone the completely opposite way again.”

Already, in less than a year and half, the style that's become known as U.K. funky has been banned, un-banned, and re-banned in countless South London clubs. Three generations of producers and DJs have effectively come and gone. And as the music crests toward perhaps a final stage, funky has splintered into a mutant, experimental phase via producers like Cooly G and Roska—right as the rest of the world has only just heard about it.





#### HOUSE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Funky has never been weird, experimental music. Or, rather, it hasn't tried to be. Whereas dubstep and grime have often alienated dancers and driven away girls, funky's aim has been to do exactly the opposite. The most basic funky track template, which rests on a simple house beat accented by *soca*-style snare gallops, is pretty traditional-sounding house; it's dance music, literally. And the imagery it evokes—bongos draped in bikini tops, champagne glasses bubbling over, and a "no trainers, no hoods" dress code—well, that's not particularly weird for dance clubs, either.

"For me, it started after I was with some girls who showed me funky house music from the U.S.," says Geeneus (who used to produce as Wizzbit, but whose real name is kept pretty hidden because of his renegade radio status). "I was a bit bored. I was listening to grime, making grime, and I was listening to this thing that was new to me—not to everyone else—but new to me. And, cool, I really liked it. So I went into the studio and made my version. And the first tune I done, 'Emotions' with DJ Zinc, it was very bass-driven. It was our way of looking at the music. It lost the house name and kept the funky name as a progression of that idea."

Before guys like Geeneus got involved with funky, the roots of the scene were built during grime's peak. Supa D, Fingaprint, Statix, and Wigman were among the first adopters, and their tastes were firmly in "soulful" dance music, meaning anything

from "old skool" garage, *soca*, and broken beat to U.S. house producers like Dennis Ferrer and Karizma.

Anthem from funky's early days tended to fall into one of two camps: on Fingaprint's "The Print," it's all about cheap, bashment-style MIDI horns over a simple house thump; pizzicato chords ride alongside and emulate *soca*'s syncopated gallop. But then there are tracks like Fingaprint's "Take Over," where the beat is like a broken version of 2-step: organ bass plays off the kicks, but the accents are all weird. And maybe it's just MC Creed's tongue-twisting babble on "Take Over," but it shares a certain resemblance to another suspicious predecessor: Zed Bias' U.K. garage classic, "Here Comes the Lick Again."

"When I was first going out to funky events, it was a lovely kind of music to dance to—it had such a nice vibe," says Kyla, vocalist for Crazy Cousinz. Her single, "Do You Mind," was one of funky's biggest leaps into U.K. pop music last year, but since then, she's branched off with producer Paleface into R&B territory.

"You used to be able to have a drink and dance, and the music wasn't so in your face," says Kyla. "But now, the music has gotten so hard, and you have all these MCs jumping on. They call out for these certain dances—they're called skanks—and then fights break out because it hypes the crowd up on a different level. It's like the music has gone off on a totally different side—it's not soulful anymore. It's like what happened with [U.K.] garage, really. Girls see a bunch of guys dancing with other guys and they're like, why bother?"

#### COOL THING

As skank tunes and the influx of MCs have made funky come off like a cheap fad, the style that Cooly G, Roska, D-Malice, and Scratcha DVA are pushing is remarkably different. In a way, they're like mutant traditionalists: They favor the sound of funky's early days (where Fingaprint is considered a demi-god), but they're taking a way more individualistic approach to the music. Scratcha DVA, for instance, is heavily grime-influenced (he was an engineer on Wiley's *Playtime is Over* album). Roska's production is super-minimal; he happens to be a big Zed Bias fan. And Cooly G didn't even know about the Hyperdub label until its owner, dubstep DJ/producer Kode 9, signed her single, "Love Dub."

**“The genre has moved so quickly, it’s unbelievable.”**

**—Roska**





"Promoters put me as 'U.K. funky queen' and all this funky/dubstep/broken-whatever," says 27-year-old Cooly G (a.k.a. Merissa Campbell). "But to be honest, I don't even know about any of that! Because, to me, the music that is *proper* U.K. funky is crap music. It's just rubbish tunes that have not done the scene any good. I call it nursery-rhyme funky. But... even though we don't really call ourselves U.K. funky, what we're doing still *is*, because the funky crowd is bubblin' to our music."

Cooly G, a single mother and a semi-pro footballer, was just making tracks on the odd Sundays when she had free until recently. However, after the success of her first record, "Love Dub," she's been on a bit of a tear: She does her own night called The Producers House in South London, she's been collaborating with Kode 9 and Scratcha DVA on new music, and she's slated to have a TV crew follow her around this month to film how she gets it all done. Practically out of nowhere, she's become the figurehead for what Geeneus calls the "4th generation" of funky.

"There's this other side of funky that Cooly, Roska, and I are into," says Scratcha DVA. "Nights like FWD at Plastic People are pushing it, so it's got more of a dubstep vibe. And it's like, I played there with Kode 9 and Cooly G last week and I got a round of applause at the end! Now, if I go into any funky dances playing bare skank tunes, you think they're gonna care who's playing, bruv? No, they're not gonna care, as long as you're playing [Gracious "Nappa Man" K's] 'Migraine Skank' or whatever."

#### WALKING THE LINE

The cross-genre policy at FWD hasn't just turned funky DJs on to dubstep, though—the dubstep guys have messed around with the other side, too. After Benga and Coki's track, "Night," was practically stolen by the funky crowd at Ayia Napa (the Cyprus island resort that's basically taken Ibiza's place as young Brits' fave new vacation spot) last year, producers like Skream and Benga have continued to do slower, funky-style edits of their tunes. Meanwhile, labels like Hessle Audio, home to Untold and Ramadanman, have also carried on with a particular, busy strain of funky-influenced tracks.

"There's definitely a split within dubstep," says Roska (a.k.a. producer Wayne Goodlitt). "I've talked to a lot of the guys—Kode 9, Shortstuff, etc.—and what I've heard is that you've got one side of dubstep that are playing that sort of 'farting dub' sound—that squeaking bass, you know what I mean? And then on the other side, there's tracks with housier elements to them; they're slowing them down, making them at 130 bpm rather than 140 or 145. It's like a little merger—the darker side of funky meeting up with the housier side of dubstep."

**"The music that is proper U.K. funky is crap music."**

**—Cooly G**



# “Everything’s a branch, and while one thing is getting done, another thing branches off.”

## —Geeneus

Headier examples of this merger are tracks like dubstep’s current anthem of the moment, Joy Orbison’s “Hyph Mngo,” or Ramadanman’s “plsñ.” The latter’s b-side, “Wad,” even apes funky’s *soca* vibe, but with a strangely studied romp of clangy percussion. “It was an early attempt at something at a lower tempo,” says Ramadanman (a.k.a. David Kennedy) of the track. “I’ve always been into house, even before dubstep. But on ‘Wad,’ I was influenced by [Rinse FM funky DJ] Marcus Nasty and the raw, percussive sounds I was hearing.”

Record stores like Boomkat, Juno, and Hardwax have noticed the lines getting fuzzier, too. Releases like Zomby’s “Digital Flora” are often tagged as a mixture of funky because they’re slower, melodic, and not quite as atonal as dubstep tends to be. This also creates a jumble of not-quite-right genre descriptors, similar to the early days of grime when you had names like “sublo” and “eski-beat” still vying for the top spot.

“Funkstep” is a name being thrown around at the moment,” says Scratcha. “I was there in the [Rinse FM] office when Geeneus first said the name. And, it’s like, with Skream, Brazen, Brackles, and these guys—it’s all becoming this one thing. And I got a feeling it’s gonna be called funkstep. Just watch, I can see it! And then the U.K. funky people are gonna come over, too, because they can’t get out of the U.K.”

### FRACTURED FUTURE

Although Geeneus claims “funkstep” was thrown around as a joke, if funky is any indication, these names tend to take on a life of their own.

“If you look at some of the podcasts on the Rinse FM website, some of them are saying ‘house and funkstep,’” says Roska. “But maybe it’s too early to be labeling stuff, even if the music has this element of meeting in between. But I do believe that places like Ayia Napa this year, they gave people a bit of a wake-up call in that they’re not sure how long or how far funky will go. Because, at the moment, the genre has moved so quickly, it’s unbelievable. In the space of a year, you’ve seen it rise from loads of singing tunes to instrumentals to MCs jumping on. I don’t see none of it as a bad thing—all the parts have their place—but it’s just weird to see how fast it’s moved.”

It’s inevitable that part of that movement will include getting away from funky altogether. While it can be said there’s strength to sticking with a scene, it’s not uncommon for U.K. artists to use these quick flashes of hype as a springboard to something else. That seems especially true of an artist like Cooly G, who is probably too musically ambitious to stick with funky anyway.

“The album that I’m doing now,” Cooly G explains, “it’s got these bits of broken beat, dub, reggae dub, funky house, deep house—everything. It’s so uncategorized. But it’s like, right now, if people are putting put me under U.K. funky, I’m not really bothered. That’s how they’re gonna see it anyway—at least until something dramatic happens. Like when my album drops. And that’s gonna be big, I’m telling you that right now. I’ve got ten *Dub Organizer* EPs ready to release on the road; I’ve got Cooly and the Gang featuring Kode 9, Scratcha, and bare producers; I’ve got bare shit coming out and it’s just gonna cause more of this kind of discussion.”

Meanwhile, there’s yet another side of the funky crowd that has opted not to follow into skank territory or the dubstep-influenced side of things. They favor the four-to-the-floor style propulsion of early funky, but they’ve gone deeper and more percussive this time around. It’s a pretty new development as these things go, but based off Rinse FM sets, the music shares a bit in common with minimal house and techno, of all things.

“I’ll still play funky and whatever, but there’s a lot of events going around like Circle, where they’re playing more house again,” says Geeneus. “They’re calling the music ‘dubbage.’ They’ve come from funky and they’ve gone off on this other land, and there are *loads* of girls in the club. And while the numbers have gone down—it’s not 1000 anymore, it’s 500 again—it’ll be like 400 females. It’s gone completely back underground, too, below everyone’s radar.

“Everything’s a branch, and while one thing is getting done, another thing branches off,” Geeneus continues. “Sometimes the branch grows big and sometimes it’s just a quick little phase. Right now, this dubbage thing is a branch, and this branch is doing well. And you’ll listen to it and say it’s just U.S. house. But it’s people from the U.K. making it, and they’re coming with another angle.”

Given all this fragmentation and distancing and differing of opinions, you have to wonder: Is funky already dead? Probably not, although like the name itself, funky’s identity has always teetered on an ambiguous point. Which is kind of perfect, really: funky as an “anti-name,” the kind of thing born out of 20-plus years of genre-waving until everyone just got sick of it. Like, if you had to title every new fashion season something new, and eventually you were just like, “fuck it... let’s just call this season ‘clothes.’”

“Things come back around, and even though funky is called funky, really you could say it’s not that much different from garage,” offers Geeneus. “It’s just another full circle. With America, hip-hop is hip-hop, and even though the music changes and new sounds and people come into it, the flow remains hip-hop. But in the U.K., as soon as something new comes along, it’s like, “Oh, that’s new music—let’s call it a new name!” when really, it’s all the same thing. We just progress along. So I’m doing funky, Skream’s doing dubstep, Wiley’s doing grime, but we’re all together. We’re all on the same radio station, we all come from the same place, and we’ve all got the same influences. It’s really all part of the same continual flow.” ●



## TOP SKANKS

Skanks are kind of like the U.K. version of krumping or jerking—they’re dances, except MCs tell you how to do them. And, truth be told, they’re really funny and awesome from a YouTube perspective; however, in the U.K., it’s a phenomenon akin to listening to Soulja Boy every day for two years.

“Before funky was even out in the clubs and people were raving to it, people were skanking,” says Cooly G. “It all comes from the basics of reggae music; it’s just a term to describe how people are bubbling in the raves. But it’s crazy right now; there are some really stupid dances. Really terrible—you don’t wanna see it.” But just in case you *do* wanna see it, here’s a look at a few of funky’s foolish floor-fillers.

### “MIGRAINE SKANK”

This might be the greatest skank of them all. Aside from being stupidly easy to do (you basically just hold your hands on your head and waddle down low), the track that goes with it is pretty good. Think: a kissing cousin to later-era U.K. garage, like DJ Narrows’ “Saved Soul” or Agent X’s “Turbulence.” Don’t forget to check out Gracious “Nappa Man” K’s instructional video on YouTube.

### “HEAD, SHOULDERS, KNEES, AND TOES”

The dance is pretty much what it sounds like (granted, it’s a little funkier), but the success of the actual song is totally perplexing. “[K.I.G. Family] were in the studio, having a laugh, and they made a little funky beat—they normally do rap and grime,” says Scratcha. “But [‘Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes’] got to the top 20! And obviously other mans were like, ‘Yeah, I know that guy, I can do that.’ So then you get loads of these other skank tunes about, videos on YouTube. It’s like the bashment sector of U.K. funky—you can go to a rave and hear nothing but tunes like this.”

### “TRIBAL SKANK”

The video for this song is fucked up, but it delivers a positive message. Basically, some Mr. Bean-looking dude happens on some dancers done up in “tribal” African make-up, so he tries to impersonate their moves while they skank around a burning barrel (it’s the ghetto, you see). After hitting his head on fences and stuff because he’s clumsy and white, it turns out the guy *can* dance—and so can a random assembly of grandmothers and police officers.

### “SWINE FLU SKANK”

Basically a mock-public service announcement, “Swine Flu Skank”’s big hook is “*Catch it/Bin it/Kill it.*” You might have guessed the dance roughly follows that idea. Best part of this song is the accompanying rap: “*Don’t come round here with your flu symptoms/Cos I don’t wanna die, duuuude.*”



# String Theory

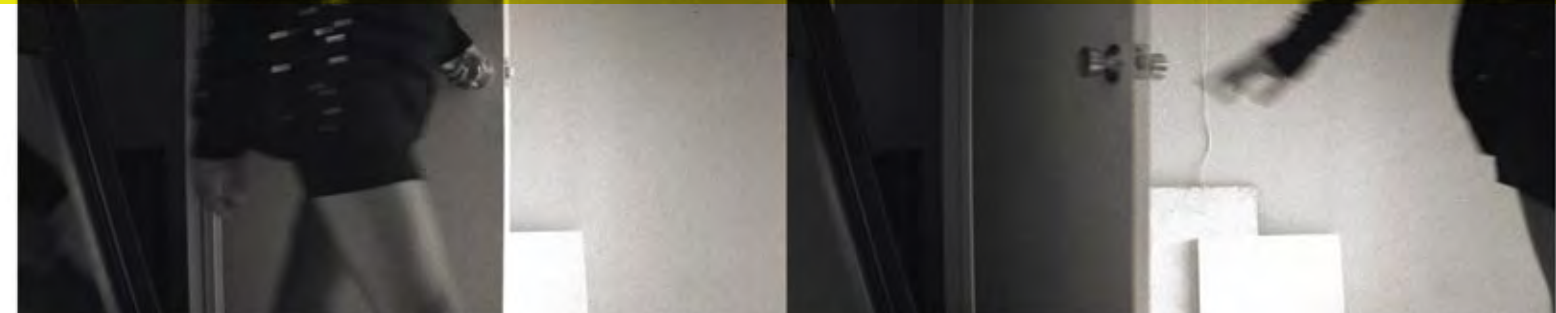
DIRECTOR TOM WINCHESTER DP JOSEPH WINCHESTER STYLIST KELLY BROWN HAIR MARCEL DAGENAIS

MAKEUP DANA JAMES PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS JON CARROLL, CLAY RODERY, TAMMIE FOSSACECA

MODELS LEAH AT FUSION, AUBREY AT FUSION, MARIA D AT VNY







LEAH WEARS:  
SKIRT BY [LA ROK](#), BLAZER BY [LA ROK](#), RING BY [EYE CANDY VINTAGE](#),  
BOOTS BY [DR. MARTENS](#),  
MODEL'S OWN SHIRT

MARIA WEARS:  
DRESS BY [LA ROK](#), CARDIGAN BY [LA ROK](#),  
SHOES BY [CASADEL](#), NECKLACE BY [EYE CANDY VINTAGE](#)



# Phillin'

PHILLY

For years, Philadelphia has been shrugged off as New York's little brother—hell, even one of our interview respondents referred us back to the Big Apple for Philly-area fun—a place where displaced Brooklynites went in search of cheaper rents, bigger spaces, and a touch less 'tude. But what's emerged over the years is far more than simply a sixth borough. From its street-level bass scene (headed up by the likes of **Starkey** and **Dev 79**) to its penchant for sweatbox parties (courtesy of **Mad Decent** and its cohorts) to its unclassifiable punk underground, Philly's still got plenty of soul. So for this year's special City Issue, we dug around the Fishtown, Northern Liberties, Chinatown, and every other little enclave we could find to bring you the best that Brotherly Love has to offer.

PHOTOS SHAWN BRACKBILL



DJ SEGA



There's a level of deep listening where "being influenced by" doesn't quite come into play.

It's very near the surface of the music that Philadelphian Wes Eisold has been releasing for just over a year, with the occasional help of friends, under the moniker Cold Cave. A near-delirious jumble of pop gestures embedded in dusty-circuit synths and mids-heavy drum machines, Cold Cave's first proper full-length, *Love Comes Close* (released on Eisold's own Heartworm Press imprint), might recall EBM or dark wave at moments, but its prerogative is less about a particular sound than a whole structure of feeling. As Eisold puts it, "What I wanted to make was an ode or memorial to the music I've spent years dancing to alone in a bedroom." It figures, then, that former Xiu Xiu member Caralee McElroy—a singer and musician well versed in bringing out the dancefloor potential of bedrooms—contributes to many of the tracks here.

More often than not, the soundtrack for Eisold's bedroom dancing was Brian Eno's "Here Come the Warm Jets," and he singles out Eno's debut album of the same name as a bridge between the structured world of hardcore and experimentation with audio processing and recording itself. As the vocalist of now-defunct post-hardcore units Some Girls and Give Up the Ghost, Eisold sees Cold Cave as a departure from his previous projects in that his writing and recording process are one and the same, involving more improvisation and more responsibility for the final product: "I record everything and end up using a lot of the mistakes I become fond of," Eisold says, echoing Eno's *Oblique Strategies* dictum to "honor thy mistake as a hidden intention." While *Love Comes Close* is undeniably more of a pop album than the noisier singles collection *Cremations* (Hospital Productions, 2009), the tracks behind Eisold's and McElroy's singing writhe and threaten to devolve into the protean tone exploration of early electronic music.

Comparing Cold Cave to the musicians they fleetingly resemble—OMD, Front 242, Chris & Cosey—is something like taking dream symbols literally. Each of the bands mentioned had their own subcultural corona in the pre-internet era, a net of references that orbited around them and described a whole way of being in the world. If there's a dreamy quality to Cold Cave's music, it's in the way it creates spaces we seem to recognize. Eisold has recalled in previous interviews how, as a child, a family friend described to him that the black-clad kids at the mall were Smiths fans. Peering into such portals is what guides Cold Cave, a project that Eisold describes as an attempt to "give back in the present to what has given so much to me in the past." In doing so, Cold Cave manages to come up with something more vital than irony or earnestness alone could muster.

*Love Comes Close* is out now on Heartworm Press.

[myspace.com/coldcave](http://myspace.com/coldcave)

D A R K W A V E A N D H E R E C O M E  
T H E W A R M J E T S C O L L I D E F O R A  
B E D R O O M D A N C E F L O O R E P I P H A N Y .

# Cold Cave

WORDS BRANDON BUSSOLINI



# Decent



OPPOSITE PAGE: TOP, MALUCA; BOTTOM LEFT, POPO; THIS PAGE: BOTTOM LEFT, DIPLO AND SKERRIT BWOY; BOTTOM RIGHT, BRICK BANDITS



DIPLO'S MAD DECENT LABEL HELD ITS SECOND-ANNUAL BLOCK PARTY IN AUGUST. PHOTOGRAPHER JOSH SISK WAS ON THE SPOT TO CATCH ALL THE ACTION—MALUCA, DJ SEGA, DUNK TANKS, AND A WHOLE LOTTA EAST COAST HEAT.



CHECK OUT OUR INTERVIEW WITH POPO AT [XLR8R.COM/129EXTRAS](http://XLR8R.COM/129EXTRAS).



# Space 1026

WORDS JOSIAH HUGHES

AN ARTIST-RUN STUDIO/GALLERY FINDS A LOVING HOME IN CHINATOWN.



At the heart of Philadelphia's Chinatown lies a semi-secret art gallery and studio known as Space 1026.

From organizing events and parties to producing top-notch art from its dozens of participants, Space 1026 has built a world-class art community in Philly that's hidden from plain view. In return, Philadelphia has nurtured the space with a hands-off approach that continues to foster a solid creative backbone.

One of the major reasons for this give-and-take is Philadelphia's ability to keep rent low for downtown studio spaces, a necessity considering the city's small art market. "Art is one of the things that you don't really make a living off of in Philadelphia," says 1026 founder Andrew Jeffrey Wright. "It's a good bike city, it's a small city,

and the rent is cheap. Philly has the same feel as Brooklyn, where there are lots of small, fun things going on, but Philly was cool before Brooklyn, because we were always inexpensive."

Bill McRight, a soft-spoken 1026 artist who creates jarringly dark portraits via linoleum cuts and screenprinting, agrees with Wright's sentiments. A traveler since birth, he lived all over the southeastern States before relocating to Philadelphia five years ago. "I'm so used to moving around a lot, but I'm definitely content," he explains. "The affordability of the city makes it good because you can spend some time working and some time going to the studio or openings."

The relative smallness of the city's art scene manifests itself in a more personal sense of community. "Everyone is interested in what [everyone else is] doing and paying attention to what's going on around them, which is definitely important," McRight explains. When it does come time to make some money from their work, the 1026 artists benefit from a \$20, two-hour bus ride to New York City on a bus that can take them

virtually anywhere on the east coast.

Thanks to its efficient infrastructure, proximity to larger cities, and its consistently affordable rent, Philadelphia is a venerable utopia for havens like Space 1026. As more people begin to realize its uniqueness, more spaces seem to open up. "There are a lot of smaller-run DIY galleries and communal spaces springing up all over the city," observes McRight. "I haven't seen that going on to the same degree in other cities. I think that's pretty rad about Philly."

As a result, the city's artistic output is unified in tone. "A lot of people are figuring out how to make things on a shoestring, so the grittiness and hustle of Philly comes through," McRight says. "Being around the attitude in Philly is really strong and influences what I draw. There's a weird element to this city. There's a very gritty, gully attitude to Philly."

space1026.com

VISIT [XLR8R.COM/129EXTRAS](http://XLR8R.COM/129EXTRAS) TO WATCH OUR EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW JEFFREY WRIGHT.



WORDS LULU MCALLISTER

## A Sunny Day in Glasgow

FROM A SCOTTISH ART COLLEGE TO A BEDROOM IN PHILLY, SHOEGAZER BEN DANIELS BRINGS IT ALL BACK HOME.

For Ben Daniels, the frontman of noise-pop outfit A Sunny Day in Glasgow, "there's no escaping Philadelphia."

Even after attending art school for a year in Glasgow, Scotland, and dropping out to stretch his legs in London for a while, he still gratefully returned home to Philly to record his shimmering sophomore album.

It's clear that he's happy to be back, but Daniels would still classify his relationship with the City of Brotherly Love as one of love and hate. While Philly has, in his words, the

"worst transportation ever, possibly in the world," it's also home to his "favorite place, possibly in the world," the Van Pelt Library at the University of Pennsylvania, and a music scene that he describes as being "on the up and up." (He and bandmate Josh Meakim regularly take in the many "punk rock-underground-basement-sort of shows" that are currently unfolding in old Victorian homes around Daniels' West Philly stomping grounds whenever they aren't checking out favorite bands like Kurt Vile and Cold Cave at The Trocadero.)

Three years ago, Daniels formed A Sunny Day in Glasgow as a bedroom project, and since then the band has featured an ever-changing lineup of musicians, including Daniels' vocally talented younger twin sisters, Robin and Lauren. "It's always

in the family, always friends," says Meakim, Daniels' friend-of-a-friend since high school who later joined the band as a drummer.

Daniels and Meakim initially intended to ditch their guitars for *Ashes Grammar*, the band's follow-up to 2007's *Scribble Mural Comic Journal*, and make an electronic album with a "big-room sound to it," says Daniels of the pair's pre-production discussions. Instead, they ended up keeping the guitars and renting an actual big room—a dance studio—in which to tinker around for hours every weekend with a mix of guitars, auxiliary percussion, a notably expensive collection of microphones, and newcomer Annie Fredrickson's luminous vocals. As Robin and Lauren Daniels became increasingly busy with school and relationships, Fredrickson took on more of the vocal work. "She would just come hang out, and I would loop parts of songs for an hour and have her sing whatever she was hearing, whatever would come out," Daniels says. "A lot of melodies got hammered out that way."

After recording their individual samples, Daniels and Meakim sent their ideas for complete tracks back and forth across Philly, not via IM or FTP but rather a communal hard drive. "In a way, I think the city infiltrates our sound," says Daniels, "because I went to Montreal to go to school, lived in Glasgow and London, and I didn't make any music in any of those cities. There's just some comfort zone I can't really get into when I'm not in Philly. Philly is the only place where I get music done." And, he notes, "the weather is definitely better here than in Glasgow."

*Ashes Grammar* is out September 15 on Mis Ojos Disco. [asunnydayinglasgow.com](http://asunnydayinglasgow.com)

JOSH MEAKIM LEADS A TOUR OF PHILLY RECORD SHOPS AT [XLR8R.COM/129EXTRAS](http://XLR8R.COM/129EXTRAS).



PH  
ILLY  
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# DJ Sega

ROLLERSKATIN' AND "PARTY" HATIN' WITH  
THE YOUTHFUL PROGENITOR OF THE  
PHILLY CLUB SOUND.

WORDS JESSE SERWER

## DJ Sega hates party music.

Not the music it refers to—in Philly that's what they call Baltimore club—but the term itself. The 22-year-old Mad Decent affiliate, a quasi-folk hero among the teens who congregate at party music hub Jamz Roller Rink on Friday nights, prefers that you call his sound "Philly club." The gesture is an homage to both Baltimore and Brick Bandits, the Newark, N.J.-based DJ crew that dubbed its own variation on the sound "Jersey club." (Sega is a founding member of the collective's adjunct Philly chapter.)

"When I came across club music, I fell in love," says Sega (a.k.a. Robert Taylor, Jr.), wistfully recalling his first exposure to 2 Hyped Brothers & a Dog's "Doo Doo Brown" as he plays a game of Frisbee golf at Philly's Fairmount Park. "It was totally unexplainable. I like to instill [that feeling] in everybody else."

Sega's own music could be described as a hybrid of B-more true-schooler Rod Lee's loose, kitchen-sink aesthetic and the crisper, more polished sound of Jersey producers like DJ Tameil. For all of his loyalty to club's pioneers, though, releases like this year's *New Jack Philly* find him toying with the genre's boundaries while remaining within its rigid sonic grid. "Colours," his contribution to last year's *Brick Bandits* EP (a six-song compilation released through Ol' Head, a label recently started by Sega and fellow Philly club DJ "Dirty South Joe" Massarueh), might be one of the smoothest club jawns ever made. Built from a sample of Janet Jackson's "Rock With U" and a robot voice from an unreleased Vengaboys song, it's practically chill-out music—at 133 beats per minute.

"When club first came out in Baltimore, it was fight music and then it was fuck music," says Sega. "It feels overwhelming to even say this, but I feel club is kind of evolving in my own hands."

Sega, whose baby face makes him look about 16, credits his DJ father and his mother's collection of dance music maxi-singles for shaping his musical DNA. "Every weekend, my mom would get a couple of singles, and she'd have it on repeat all day and we'd never get tired of it," says Sega. "I guess that's where I get my ideas on remixes. I love to make somebody's favorite their favorite all over again."

Having reconfigured everything from Capleton's "Everybody Needs Somebody" to "The Magical Amount" song from those annoying anti-cigarette commercials, he already has a catalog so deep that his DJ sets now consist entirely of Sega originals.

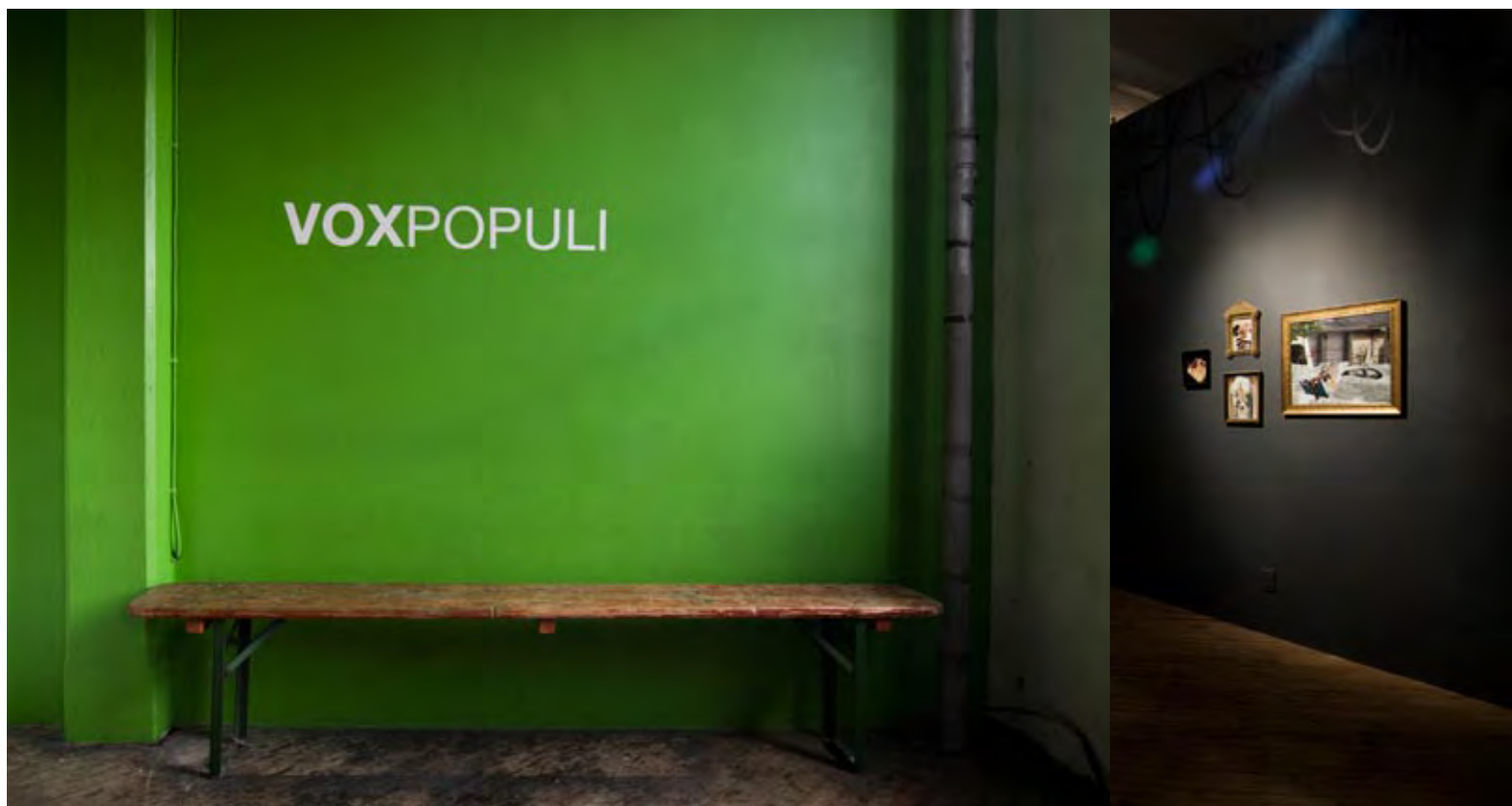
"The best thing you can do is Google me everyday," he suggests between Frisbee tosses. "I got a lot of ideas and I'm gonna try to get at least half of 'em out before I die."

*New Jack Philly* is out now on Mad Decent.  
[myspace.com/djsegatheblackknight](https://myspace.com/djsegatheblackknight)



# Philly City Guide

WORDS VIVIAN HOST



## Art Galleries

### Copy Gallery

*319 N. 11th St., 3rd Floor*  
After the demise of the grimy, quasi-legendary local art/show space Black Floor, artists Jamie Dillon, Nick Paparone, and Annette Monnier opened this third-floor space (in the same building as Vox Populi) dedicated to kooky performance pieces and the Philly *savant garde*. Openings are usually Friday nights, with other hours by appointment.  
[copygallery.org](http://copygallery.org)

### Crane Arts Building

*1400 N. American St.*  
This Northern Liberties community art space, housed in a massive 100-year-old brick building, has several large project spaces (including the Ice Box, The Hall, and the Grey Area) that are home to everything from MFA shows and fringe theater performances to installations from local talents. It's also home to cutting-edge arts organization Nexus.  
[cranearts.com](http://cranearts.com)

### Danger Danger Gallery

*5013 Baltimore Ave.*  
Ummm... this punk house is actually more of a band show space than a gallery, but they say the rock, noise, and general mayhem provided by bands like Pterodactyl, Street Gnar, and Narwhal of Sound blurs the big fuzzy line between performance art and pop. Find their Facebook page for the newest show listings.  
[myspace.com/dangerdangergallery](http://myspace.com/dangerdangergallery)

### Fleischer/Olman

*1616 Walnut Ave., Suite 100*  
Kehinde Wiley, Eva Wylie, Ashley Macomber, and Isaac Lin are among those who've shown at this cool Rittenhouse Square space. Though no longer strictly devoted to self-taught art, this 50-year-old establishment still retains a loose, worldly, and underground curatorial feel, with recent shows put together by Man Man's Steven Dufala and Bonnie 'Prince' Billy.  
[fleischer-olmangallery.com](http://fleischer-olmangallery.com)

### F.U.E.L. Collection

*249 Arch St.*  
Next to the Betsy Ross House stands this impressive old bank building (the former Philly *Real World* house), which looks more like it should house a museum than a private gallery. Inside is a two-story modern gallery with interesting shows probing everything from abstract expressionism to nature photography, fashion to digital prints to performance art. The best (but most crowded) time to come is during the First Fridays art walk, when they usually have DJs, food, and drink.  
[fuelcollection.com](http://fuelcollection.com)

### FLUXspace

*3000 N. Hope St.*  
A revamped North Philly warehouse contains the Art Making Machine artist studios and the exhibition space known as Flux, notable for pushing cutting-edge digital art, plus *avant garde* performance (dance, theater).  
[thefluxspace.org](http://thefluxspace.org)

### The Galleries at Moore College of Art & Design

*20th St. and The Parkway*  
This series of white-box galleries at Moore College of Art & Design reflects the current cultural interests of Philly, with recent shows focusing on photojournalism from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, rock posters, and bike culture, along with frequent student art shows.  
[thegalleriesatmoore.org](http://thegalleriesatmoore.org)

### Little Berlin

*1801 N. Howard St.*  
An eight-member collective runs this warehouse space. In typical Philly fashion, it has hosted everything from book sales to badminton tournaments to group art shows featuring up-and-coming names from the city's street-level art scene.  
[littleberlin.org](http://littleberlin.org)

### Mew Gallery

*906 Christian St.*  
A girly, crafty store that also doubles as a gallery, showing mostly hand-drawn illustrations, picaresque paintings, and miniatures by people like Tim Gough and J.L. Schnabel—at affordable prices, naturally.  
[mewgallery.org](http://mewgallery.org)

### Pageant Soloveev

*607 Bainbridge St.*  
Sculptor and painter Daniel Dalseth runs this five-year-old gallery, where his taste for the fantastical reigns supreme. The artists on view lean towards relative unknowns who are nonetheless devoted to craft, while the art itself has included

monster drawings, giant hamburger sculptures, and Dionysian collages.  
[pageantsoloveev.com](http://pageantsoloveev.com)

### Painted Bride Art Center

*230 Vine St.*  
Founded in the late '60s, and retaining quite a bit of that aesthetic, Painted Bride is an artist-run space in Old Philly that showcases world music, dance, and community art. They make an effort to reach out to younger audiences via curated shows from local house maven King Britt to involving younger artists in site-specific shows.  
[paintedbride.org](http://paintedbride.org)

### Shadow's Space

*1248 N. Front St.*  
This kitschy and comfortable space is located upstairs from Kung Fu Necktie and co-owned by Erik Foss (who also owns Lit Bar and its attendant Fuse Gallery in NYC). A lo-fi, handmade, DIY aesthetic prevails here, which means the work varies wildly in quality—but it's usually pretty fun.  
[shadowsspace.com](http://shadowsspace.com)

### Slought Foundation

*4017 Walnut St.*  
A bit like Philly's answer to NYC's Creative Time, deep thought is the order of the day at this art foundation, which presents socio-cultural work related to city living. This ain't no hippie thing—the space has presented installation, video art, photos, and lectures from Vito Acconci, Tracey Emin, Jeremy Deller, and Stephen "ESPO" Powers.  
[slought.org](http://slought.org)

### Space 1026

*1026 Arch St.*  
The granddaddy of Philly art collectives, Space 1026 gallery and art studios remains anything but boring, showcasing crazy installations, drawings, and paintings created on-site from collective members like Isaac Lin, Andrew Jeffrey Wright, and Ben Woodward, along with shows from friends like Paper Rad, Seripop, and AJ Fosik. Aside from show openings, there are no regular gallery hours, but someone will usually buzz you in to check out the show or pick up something from the small store.  
[space1026.com](http://space1026.com)

### Vox Populi

*319 N. 11th St.*  
For over 20 years, the artist-run Vox Populi has been one of Philly's most important places, hosting local bands and record fairs, while defining Philly art with important group shows that often feature video art, installation, and wild mixed media. While there, you may want to check out the new-ish Tiger Strikes Asteroid gallery, located in the same building.  
[voxpopuligallery.org](http://voxpopuligallery.org)

## Bars

### 700 Club

*700 N. 2nd St.*  
In a very hip part of town lies this two-story house converted into a very unpretentious bar with well-priced drinks, a friendly staff, and hipsters hanging out and getting down.  
[myspace.com/9225824](http://myspace.com/9225824)

### Bar Ferdinand

*1030 N. 2nd St.*  
Northern Liberties gets a classy, romantically lit, and trendy Spanish tapas bar to call its own. The happy hour—with half-priced sangria and drafts—is the best time to go and sample small plates like goat cheese 'n' kale croquettes and manchego cheese with apple foam.  
[barferdinand.com](http://barferdinand.com)

### The Barbary

*951 Frankford Ave.*  
Local DJ John Redden re-opened this venue as a cash-only casbah for dancefloor fiends. Events include Monday's The Jang House (loosely curated by Spank Rock and friends), Mike Z's indie dance monthly *Sorted*, and Dirty South Joe & Brendan BringEm's horizontal house thing, among other '60s soul, electronic, and '80s jams. A photo booth, cheap drinks, and performances by the likes of Plastic Little and Vivian Girls have cemented this spot as the place to be for the hippest 30-and-unders in town.  
[thebrby.blogspot.com](http://thebrby.blogspot.com)

### Drinker's Tavern

*124 Market St.*  
The neon beer signs in the window say it all about this place: cheap drinks, big bar, nice staff, no frills. The general feel is Midwestern basement kitsch, complete with red vinyl booths and black-velvet paintings of John Wayne and Elvis.  
[drinkers215.com](http://drinkers215.com)

### The Khyber

*56 S. 2nd St.*  
A two-floor Old City institution with mostly rock, metal, and punk bands of varying quality on the groundfloor and DJs up top. It's not quite what it used to be, but is still a reliable spot for cheap beer and occasional DJ nights from the likes of dirty bass heads Seclusiasm and bike crew Barred for Life.  
[thekhyber.com](http://thekhyber.com)

### Kung Fu Necktie

*1248 N. Front St.*  
Telefon Tel Aviv, Wooden Shjips, and Black Dice are among the bands that have played at this smallest Asian-themed (in a TGI Friday's sort of way) dive bar. Always dark, and usually pretty cool; make sure to check out the upstairs gallery, Shadow's Space, as well.  
[kungfunectie.com](http://kungfunectie.com)

### McGillin's Olde Ale House

*1310 Drury St.*  
Do you want a piece of the past? Sure you do... and so does everyone else, which would explain why McGillin's, the oldest continuously operating tavern in Philadelphia, is usually crammed

to the gills with tourists, frat rats, and beerhounds wanting to drink with historical ghosts. Still, it's worth a trip to this 150-year-old Irish pub, which boasts its own brew and a \$7 steak.  
[mcjillins.com](http://mcjillins.com)

### Monk's Cafe

*264 S. 16th St.*  
If you know your Chimay from your Framboise, you'll love this dark temple to Belgian beer, with one of the biggest ale selections in the whole city. Go early or late to avoid the after-work crowd, and sample their burgers, seitan cheesesteak, or mussels cooked eight different ways.  
[monkscafe.com](http://monkscafe.com)

### The Pope

*1501 E. Passyunk Ave.*  
While it may look like a dad bar, this pub is actually home to South Philly's young, wild, and tattooed, who come for the jukebox (18 plays for \$5!) and vegetarian menu and stay for the cheap (but extensive) beer list. Wednesday nights are the most popular, with a rotating cast of rockabilly and soul DJs, and more hipsters than you can shake a papal chalice at.  
[myspace.com/pubonpassyunkeast](http://myspace.com/pubonpassyunkeast)

### Prohibition Tap Room

*501 N. 13th St.*  
Cozy and dimly lit, this turn-of-the-century-styled bar focuses on craft beers (though there's a bigger bottle selection than draft) and quality bar food (beer-battered green beans, pulled-pork sandwiches), with a staff

that always remembers your name and drink.  
[theprohibitiontaproom.com](http://theprohibitiontaproom.com)

### P.Y.T.

*1050 N. Hancock St.*  
A brand new bar and burger joint opened by Tommy Up, one of Philly's best promoters. A no-nonsense menu, alcoholic milkshakes, outdoor seating, and ample room to shake your ass.  
[pytphilly.com](http://pytphilly.com)

### Ray's Happy Birthday Bar

*1200 E. Passyunk Ave*  
In South Philly's Italian sector, flanked by competing cheesesteak shops Pat's and Geno's, you'll find Ray's Happy Birthday Bar, where the main attractions are Friday night karaoke and a 7 a.m. first call.  
[thehappybirthdaybar.com](http://thehappybirthdaybar.com)

### The Ruba

*414 Green St.*  
A Philly social club (the Russian-Ukrainian Boating Association) where you need to be a member to get in (it costs \$5, and half the time they will never check for your card). The hall stays open 'til 3:30 a.m. and a 75-year-old bartender serves you \$3 beers; you can also rent the place for \$120.  
[myspace.com/ruba\\_club](http://myspace.com/ruba_club)

### Tattooed Mom

*530 South St.*  
The downstairs restaurant area of this two-story bar is the epitome of tacky, with ridiculous decor, lime-green walls, and lollipops on the tables (plus a passable menu of pierogi, chicken

fingers, and vegan BLTs), while the upstairs is a brokedown palace of punk posters, graffiti, and dirty couches. In other words, a perfect Philly dive. Check out their other location, Sugarmom's, for more of the same.  
[myspace.com/tattooed\\_mom](http://myspace.com/tattooed_mom)

### Tritone's

*1508 South St.*  
A South Street dive with blues bands and cheap beer. Maybe not the best choice on weekends, but it could be good for Sunday munchies, with a menu that includes deep-fried pickles and candy bars, and a peanut-butter-and-fluff quesadilla.  
[tritonebar.com](http://tritonebar.com)

### Woody's

*202 S. 13th St.*  
A gay bar with a huge upstairs dancefloor and an awesome soundsystem. Snacks, Dave P's monthly party (first Tuesdays of the month), brings in some of electro-house and nu-disco's best names.  
[woody'sbar.com](http://woody'sbar.com)

## Cafes

### Anthony's Italian Coffee House

*903 S. 9th St.*  
Great iced coffee, macchiatos, and old-world charm in the Italian Market. Make sure to try the awesome cannoli and biscotti (and gelato in the summer).  
[italiancoffeehouse.com](http://italiancoffeehouse.com)





**Benna's**  
*8th and Wharton Sts.*  
 This small South Philly standard has good iced coffee and a super-relaxed neighborhood vibe. It's so homey, they even put crafty knitted cozies on their hot drinks.  
[bennascafe.com](http://bennascafe.com)

**B2**  
*1500 E. Passyunk Ave*  
 The second outpost of the popular Benna's, this cafe offers plenty of counter seating, plus an extensive menu of vegetarian treats (brie 'n' apple sandwiches, vegan soft-serve) to appeal to the South Philly bike squad.

**Caribou Cafe**  
*1126 Walnut St.*  
 Probably the best feature of this French bistro is the quality people-watching from their outdoor seating. A good place to linger with a cappuccino or glass of wine, though the food (burgers, mussels, salads) is only so-so.  
[cariboucafe.com](http://cariboucafe.com)

**Cafe Grindstone**  
*622 S. 5th St.*  
 This laid-back cafe next to the Philly Record Exchange sells kooky drinks, from horchata and goji-berry shots to vegan cookies 'n' cream milkshakes and iced maté. With an ample selection of magazines, a vegan menu, WiFi, and a vinyl station that invites patrons to man the hi-fi, they won't mind if you chill a while. Purportedly, the owner, DJ Brian Gallagher, also offers sword-sharpening services.  
[myspace.com/cafe grindstoneheart](http://myspace.com/cafe grindstoneheart)

**Cafe Lift**  
*428 N. 13th St.*  
 Cafe Lift serves more than just coffee in an industrial neighborhood that needs just that. Weekend brunches are notable at this Euro-style cafe, but you won't mind the tinge of yuppie attitude.  
[cafelift.com](http://cafelift.com)

**Cafe Ole**  
*147 N. 3rd St.*  
 An Israeli expat owns this down-to-earth Old City spot that's notable for its delicious fresh food and friendly atmosphere. Free WiFi, too.

**Chapterhouse**  
*620 S. 9th St.*  
 A good soundtrack on the hi-fi and free wireless make this place a laptop haven, but local art on the walls, boardgames, and an outdoor patio make it a Bella Vista hang-out as well.  
[myspace.com/chapterhouse](http://myspace.com/chapterhouse)

**Euphoria**  
*1001 N. 2nd St.*  
 Its failed attempts at arty decor aside, this Piazza cafe offers something more for the sweet tooth: customizable smoothies in flavors like acai and papaya, plus boba, stuffed pretzels, and all the regular coffee options.  
[nieuphoria.com](http://nieuphoria.com)

**The Flying Saucer Cafe**  
*2545 Brown St.*  
 They sell coffee, Pop Tarts, and have boardgames. It's a bright, down-to-earth cafe when you don't need anything cooler than a good cup of Joe.  
[theflyingsaucer.net](http://theflyingsaucer.net)

**La Colombe Torrefaction**  
*130 S. 19th St.*  
 An elegant, Milan-like feel prevails at this high-end Philly coffee chain with its own in-house roastery. If you like perfectly made espresso drinks, then you won't mind the tinge of yuppie attitude.  
[lacolombe.com](http://lacolombe.com)

**The Last Drop**  
*1300 Pine St.*  
 One of the epicenters of Philly cool-kid culture, this shambolic coffeehouse offers espresso, a little attitude, and a place to pick up club flyers or tickets for the next big night at Pure.  
[lastdropcoffeehouse.com](http://lastdropcoffeehouse.com)

**Red Hook Coffee & Tea**  
*765 S. 4th St.*  
 A socially responsible stop on Fabric Row, this punky, cash-only cafe has free WiFi, plenty of seating, and a good cup of coffee. What, you need more?  
[myspace.com/redhookcoffee](http://myspace.com/redhookcoffee)

**RIM Cafe**  
*1172 S. 9th St.*  
 The highlights of this French cafe are the cappuccino brûlée (in which a blowtorch is taken to the sugary top of the espresso drink), personal Lavazza coffee brewed in siphons, and the Volcano hot chocolate, among other whimsically sweet treats.  
[rimcafe.com](http://rimcafe.com)

**T Bar**  
*117 S. 12th St.*  
 Its clinical, modern decor could be more inviting, but if you are either

a) really into tea or b) need a WiFi-equipped workspace, then T Bar fits the bill. A pair of Korean sisters opened this spot, which serves over 70 varieties of flavored leaves, plus boba, maté, and even tea cookies; check out their book-swap drawer for new reading material.  
[tbarteas.com](http://tbarteas.com)

**Old City Coffee**  
*221 Church St.*  
 A city staple that just can't do wrong. Super-strong coffee and a good place for people watching.  
[oldcitycoffee.com](http://oldcitycoffee.com)

**Record Stores**

**AKA Music**  
*2027 Sansom St.*  
 A large, spacious, and cool indie record store with a helpful staff and in-store performances from the likes of Man Man and Spinto Band.  
[myspace.com/aka\\_music](http://myspace.com/aka_music)

**Philadelphia Record Exchange**  
*618 S. 5th St*  
 This store has a staggering selection of used vinyl and CDs from the worlds of rock, jazz, R&B, and beyond, though it's quite a hunt to find the real treasures.  
[philarrecx.com](http://philarrecx.com)

**Repo Records**  
*538 South St.*  
 A '90s-style record store (they've even got a quote from *High Fidelity* on their website) crammed to the gills with a ton of good new and used rock.  
[reporecords.com](http://reporecords.com)

**Tequila Sunrise**  
*525 W. Girard Ave.*  
 The best spot in the city for all things electronic. From dubstep to minimal, owner Tony stocks it all (plus jazz, reggae, rock, etc.) in a super-organized fashion and with well-informed reviews on each record. If you can't bear to leave the computer, a weekly newsletter keeps you updated on new arrivals.  
[tequilasunriserecords.com](http://tequilasunriserecords.com)

**Restaurants**

**Amada**  
*217-219 Chestnut St.*  
 You can get a whole roast suckling pig or yellowfin tuna à la plancha at Jose Garces' high-end Spanish favorite, but most customers opt for unique tapas, like crab-stuffed peppers, flatbread pizzas, and oysters with strawberry escabeche.  
[amadarestaurant.com](http://amadarestaurant.com)

**Aramingo Diner**  
*3356 Aramingo Ave.*  
 The epitome of bad diner food, but at 4 a.m. Sunday morning, drunk and craving bacon, who can say no?

**Brown Betty Petite**  
*269 South 20th St.*  
 The Rittenhouse Square offshoot of a local cake bakery is notable for their cupcakes—red velvet, pineapple pound cake, and carrot with cream cheese icing are favorites—but they also serve interesting southern desserts like sweet potato pudding and strawberry

poundcake with frosting. Check the website for daily specials.  
[brownbetydesserts.com](http://brownbetydesserts.com)

**Cantina Dos Segundos**  
*931 N. Second St.*  
 A Philly institution for Mexican food. The regular fare is a bit run-of-the-mill, but the plates (slow-cooked goat, turkey mole) are to die for. They also own the popular Cantina Los Caballitos in South Philly.  
[cantinadossegundos.com](http://cantinadossegundos.com)

**Capogiro**  
*119 S. 13th St.*  
 Flavors like black mission fig, heirloom tomato, and lemon basil (along with the regular stuff) make this place a standard for fresh sorbet and creamy artisan gelato, made using ingredients from local farms.  
[capogirogelato.com](http://capogirogelato.com)

**Chickie's Italian Deli**  
*1014 Federal St.*  
 A real Italian hoagie awaits at this South Philly shop. Chicken cutlet, tuna with prosciutto, and roast beef are popular options, but even the staunchest meat eaters will freak out over the award-winning Veggie Special, a crusty roll stuffed full of garlicky broccoli rabe, eggplant, and melted provolone.  
[chickiesdell.com](http://chickiesdell.com)

**Dante and Luigi's**  
*762 S. 10th St.*  
 A great old-world Italian spot that's been housed in the same building since 1899, serving up delicious standards

like chicken parmigiana, veal bracciole, and linguini with clams. Cash-only, BYOB, and if you're a regular they'll open a running tab for you!  
[danteandluigis.com](http://danteandluigis.com)

**Fork**  
*306 Market St.*  
 An Old City restaurant that specializes in New American bistro food, which translates into lots of organic and locally produced ingredients and fresh-tasting dishes like house-smoked pork chops and pan-seared softshell crab with cayenne pepper. A wonderful place for a date, but be ready to drop at least \$80 to \$100 (including drinks).  
[forkrestaurant.com](http://forkrestaurant.com)

**Franklin Fountain**  
*116 Market St.*  
 Classic ice-cream desserts like peach melba and cherries jubilee share counter space with turn-of-the-century candies and sodas, sundaes, and more at this retro ice-cream parlor and soda fountain, named after Philly native Benjamin Franklin.  
[franklinfountain.com](http://franklinfountain.com)

**Good Dog**  
*224 S. 15th St.*  
 Nothing fancy at the brew pub/sports bar, except one of the best burgers in town: ground sirloin stuffed with roquefort cheese and caramelized onions. The rest of the menu veers wildly between standards and stranger fare (duck pot pie, corn & cheese fondue) but all good and cheap in an area not known for the latter.  
[gooddogbar.com](http://gooddogbar.com)

**Govinda's**  
*1408 South St.*  
 A Center City vegetarian staple, encompassing a nice sit-down restaurant (popular for their buffet) and a To Go spot next door, whose vegetarian chicken cheesesteak and vegan ice cream are to die for.  
[govindasvegetarian.com](http://govindasvegetarian.com)

**Honey's Sit N' Eat**  
*800 N. 4th St.*  
 The best of brunch—with ingredients like homemade mayonnaise and applesauce, and sides like cheese & onion latkes and fluffy biscuits—and a long wait to prove it. Lunch and dinner are no slouch either, and substantially less crowded. Cash only, BYOB.

**Le Bec-Fin**  
*1523 Walnut St.*  
 The best French fare in town, hands down. This 40-year-old spot offers a taste of Versailles in P-town, with classics from steak frites to veal sweetbreads in a slightly fussy atmosphere. Can be wallet-draining, but the best deals come at happy hour, their weekday dinner and lunch *prix fixe* meals, and on their bar menu. Also, save room for the mouth-watering \$15 all-you-can-eat dessert cart.  
[lebecfin.com](http://lebecfin.com)

**Lorenzo & Son Pizza**  
*305 South St.*  
 A South Street institution, with no seating and no topping on slices, so don't ask. As good as Philly late-night pizza gets, at an affordable \$2.50 a slice.

**Morimoto's**  
*723 Chestnut St.*  
 Iron Chef Masaharu Morimoto presides over this overpriced, but utterly delicious, modern Japanese restaurant (check its space-age decor). The menu features melt-in-your mouth *nigiri*, hot entrees like miso cod and eight-spice lobster, and the popular *omakase* tasting flights, which will set you back a cool \$80 to \$120.  
[morimotorestaurant.com](http://morimotorestaurant.com)

**Pat's**  
*1237 E. Passyunk Ave.*  
 The classic Cheez Whiz-smothered Philly cheesesteak in all its iterations (pizza steak, pepper, mushrooms). Attitude-filled service and a line of salivating tourists can be drawbacks, but Pat's has still got the real greasy deal... and it's open 24/7.  
[patskingofsteaks.com](http://patskingofsteaks.com)

**Pho & Cafe Viet Huong**  
*1110 Washington Ave., #2A*  
 Among the Vietnamese strip-mall joints of Washington Avenue, Viet Huong is one of the best, and a lot less busy than neighboring Nam Phuong. They've got an extensive menu with DIY spring rolls and broken rice dishes, but most people are slurping up huge, cheap bowls of *pho*, or indulging in unique items like sweet-bean ices and durian shakes.

**Reading Terminal Market**  
*51 N. 12th St.*  
 With its awesome assortment of vendors, from Amish bakers to chocolate-makers to fresh fish sellers, this is a great place to bring tourist

friends for lunch... or yourself, when you can't decide what to eat after a long Chinatown Bus ride.

[readingterminalmarket.org](http://readingterminalmarket.org)

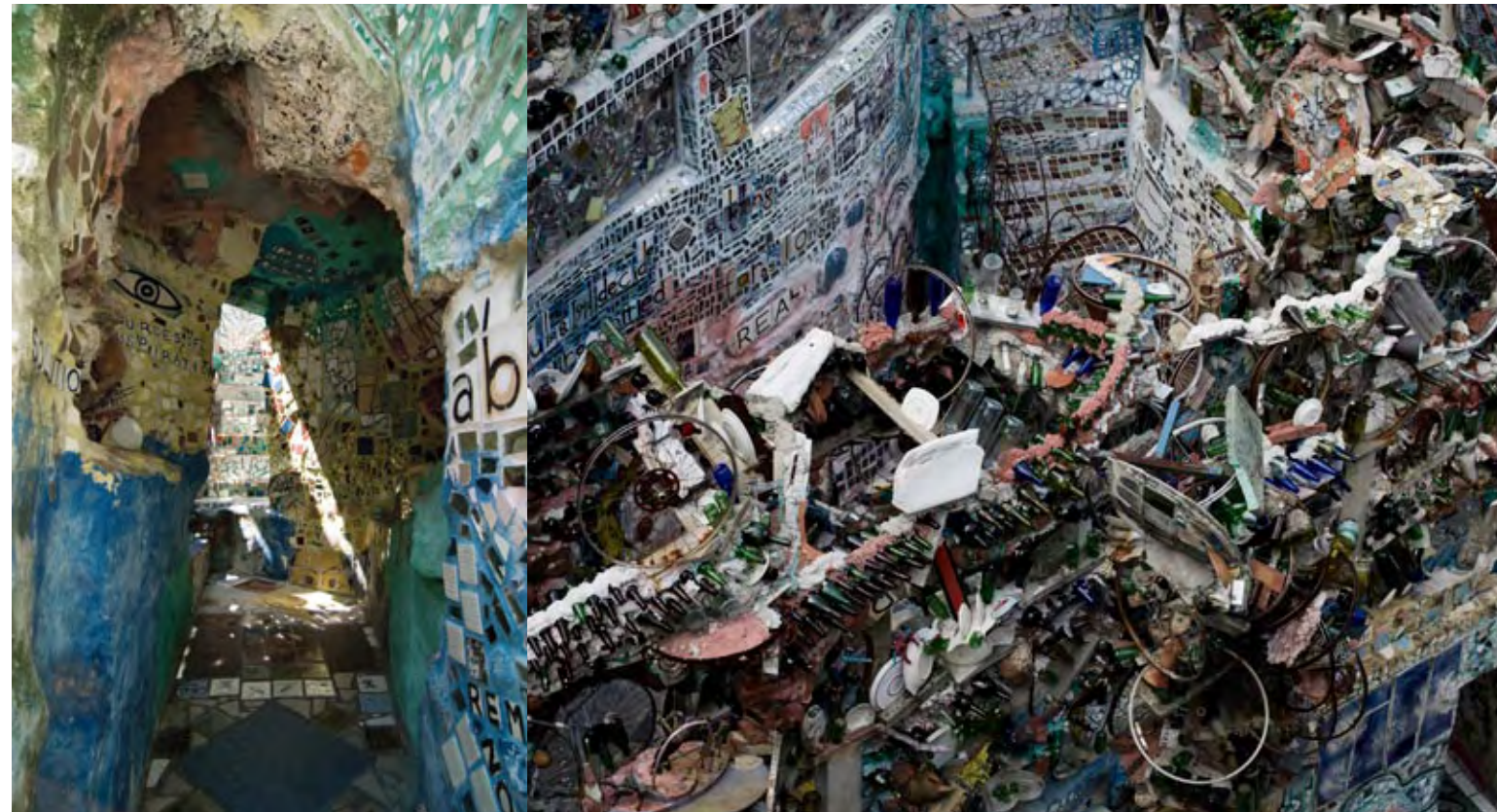
**University City Food Trucks**  
*38th and Spruce Sts.*  
 A suite of food trucks around UPenn that offer the cuisines of the world at student prices. Popular options include the seitan-dispensing Magic Carpet vegetarian cart, the KoJa Korean food stall, Bui's breakfast-sandwich-and-Vietnamese outpost, Abner's cheesesteaks, and Tacos Don Memo. Hours for each cart vary.

**Silk City**  
*435 Spring Garden St.*  
 A club, bar, and classic diner car all rolled into one. Thursday nights are chock full of great hip-hop and club music, along with kids who may or may not be old enough to drink. But with a kitchen that stays open till 1 a.m., just grab a booth and go with it.  
[silkcityphilly.com](http://silkcityphilly.com)

**Shops**

**Abakus Takeout**  
*227 N. 10th St.*  
 Krink pens, BAPE hoodies, Reebok Pumps, and Crooks & Castles tees for the sneaker freakers reside at this sleek space with an area-appropriate Chinese-takeout theme.  
[abakustakeout.com](http://abakustakeout.com)





**Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction**

116 N. 3rd St.  
Named after a line in a Walter Benjamin essay, local company Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction started as a t-shirt and tote line but has moved on to a grown-up-art-school-grad aesthetic. Their well-appointed store stocks their own clothing line, soaps, and liquor, as well as high-end items from local artists and designers.  
artintheage.com

**Art Star**

623 N. 2nd St.  
A homespun store offering consignment items (from housewares to clothing) by artist friends, many of them local. They also host documentary screenings, classes, vintage sales, and illustration-driven art shows, making them a community hub for the Etsy.com set.  
artstarphilly.com

**Avril 50**

3406 Sansom St.  
Avril 50 sells chocolate, tobacco, coffee, and, most importantly, all the art, fashion, and foreign magazines that aren't stocked anywhere else in the city.

**Barney's Co-Op**

1811 Walnut St.  
This high-end New York favorite is new this year to Philadelphia, with the same selection of fashion-forward items from the likes of Alexander Wang, Phillip Lim, Ferragamo, and more. The difference is that you get to take advantage

of Philly's unaware/unfashionable shoppers and rack up all the well-priced sale items that no one has touched.  
barneys.com

**Bicycle Revolutions**

712 S. 4th St.  
A tasteful collection of fixie bikes and accessories (hats, toe straps, helmets, bags) with helpful, non-snobby service and a community feel. On fourth Fridays, the space hosts a gallery event with rotating artists.  
bicyclerevolutions.com

**Boyd's**

1818 Chestnut St  
While overpriced and teeming with aggressive salespeople, Boyd's is home to designer labels and constant sales. Just call a friend and make them stay on the phone with you to keep the commission-hungry employees at bay.  
boydsphila.com

**Bus Stop**

750 S. 4th St.  
If you know your Repettos from your Tom's, and Pour La Victoire from Fornarina, then watch your wallet at this rad shoe boutique on Fabric Row.  
busstopboutique.com

**Exit Skateshop**

825 N. 2nd St.  
Since 2001, these beloved skate bros have been servicing the Philly area with boards, wheels, and quickstrike Nike SBs for the fashion dudes. This past July, they also opened Pop's Skatepark at E. Huntingdon St. & Trenton Ave.  
exitphiladelphia.com

**Forbidden Planett**

10 N. 3rd St.  
A women's-only vintage and consignment store specializing in gently used fancy dress items from names like Manolo, Prada, and Yves St. Laurent, and offers attentive service for those who know their stuff. The store has carefully curated clothes from many decades, with prices considerably higher than your average secondhand store.

**Foster's Homeware**

399 Market St.  
A store \*wallpaper magazine would love, with high-design housewares from dishes to clocks to novelty items (bunny-shaped duster, anyone?). Way too much good stuff—be ready for some credit-card exercise.  
shopfosters.com

**Giovanni's Room**

345 S. 12th St.  
This large gay- and lesbian-oriented bookstore is a hub for the local queer community, stocking activist literature, erotica, fiction, and gay-themed items, with frequent author readings and events.  
giovannisroom.com

**Joseph Fox Bookshop**

1724 Sansom St.  
A tiny Penn Square spot packed wall-to-wall with books, notable for its architecture and art tomes, new titles, SBs for the fashion dudes. This past July, they also opened Pop's Skatepark at E. Huntingdon St. & Trenton Ave.  
foxbookshop.com

**Omoi**

1608 Pine St.  
A shrine to all things cute and Japanese, but if you're not into pencil cases, notebooks, and plush toys, they also stock t-shirts by 2K and Hellz Bellz and other clothes by local designers.  
omonline.com

**Philly AIDS Thrift**

514 Bainbridge St.  
AIDS thrift stores typically have the best selection, and this Queen's Village emporium is no exception. Though the clothes can sometimes be picked over, the housewares and books are great, and visit their new garage (open Fri-Sun, afternoons) across the street for furniture deals.  
phillyaidsthift.blogspot.com

**The Piazza at Schmidt's**

1000-1013 2nd Ave.  
An 80,000-square-foot hipster mall (along the lines of L.A.'s The Grove) that contains numerous restaurants (Swift Pub, PYT), boutiques (notably Fresh Melt Water and Print Liberation), and art galleries, and hosts events from movies and DJ nights to yoga in the outdoor piazza.  
atthepiazza.com

**Reward**

55 N. 2nd St.  
As close to a New York boutique as you can find in Philly, Reward pushes the likes of Opening Ceremony, A.P.C., Henrik Vibskov, Wood Wood, and many more.  
rewardproject.com

**Robin's Book Store**

110A S. 13th St.  
The city's oldest independent bookseller stocks a baffling amount of macabre and indie rags, along with a daring selection of new and used books. A great community space where they won't hesitate to draw you toward a new book you've never thought of.  
robinsbookstore.com

**Sugarcube**

124 N. 3rd St.  
If you don't like to hunt through musty thrift-store bins, but would rather have someone hand-pick your vintage, you will love Sugarcube's well-organized and curated selection of new and used men's and women's clothes, with an eye towards classics like flannels, leather boots, and cute hats that you will wear again and again.  
sugarcube.us

**Topstitch**

54 N. 3rd St., 2nd Floor  
An uber-cool selection of vintage and small-run women's wear and new accessories, picked by ladies with super on-trend tastes.  
topstitchboutique.com

**Ubiq**

1509 Walnut St.  
Sneaker fiends will drool over limited-edition releases and items from The Hundreds, In4mation, and Stüssy Deluxe at this streetwear gallery. The architecture mixes a futuristic black-and-white museum feel in the sneaker room, with an English-estate look for the back room. They've also

got another space in the Gallery mall at 10th and Market.  
ubiqlife.com

**Wilbur Vintage**

716 S. 4th St.  
Expect a cool and unusual vintage selection at this recently opened boutique, where the owner Wilbur, with his cutting-edge tastes and no-nonsense outlook, will help you curate an outfit that no one else in the club would think of.  
wilburvintage.blogspot.com

**Wooden Shoe Books & Records**

508 S. 5th St.  
For over 30 years, this non-profit anarchist collective has been purveying radical literature, t-shirts, pamphlets, and the like, and they also host a ton of events at this cramped space, including book clubs, movie screenings, readings, and historical talks.  
woodenshoebooks.org

**Unique Spots**

**Academy of Natural Sciences**  
1900 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy.  
It's not as grand as the natural history museums in Chicago or New York, but it's trying! Still a cool selection of animals alive (butterflies, geckos) and dead (dinosaur skeletons).  
ansp.org

**City Hall**

1450 John F. Kennedy Blvd.  
The world's largest masonry building and the largest municipal building in

the U.S., decorated with 250 sculptures by the legendary Alexander Calder. Across from the building is the hulking Pennsylvania Grand Lodge Temple, both are home to lots of Freemasonry symbols and lore.  
phila.gov

**Comcast Center Lobby**

1701 Arch St.  
Sounds dumb to list an office lobby, but the Comcast Center houses the world's largest HDTV screen (at 83 ft. wide by 24 ft. high), and its ever-changing imagery is pretty amazing.

**Eastern State Penitentiary**

2027 Fairmount Ave.  
This centrally located old prison was once home to Al Capone and many more. Built in 1829, the pen's nighttime and haunted Halloween tours are extra-creepy.  
easternstate.org

**Edgar Allen Poe National Historic Site**

532 N. 7th St.  
The writer Edgar Allen Poe's old house is home to a museum devoted to his work. Elvira did a Halloween reading there last year! Awesome!  
nps.gov/edal

**Fabric Workshop & Museum**

1214 Arch St.  
A non-profit museum dedicated to textiles and fabric arts, with gallery shows, silkscreening classes, and a shop that stocks goods made by its artists-in-residence.  
fabricworkshop.org

**Fairmount Park**

Belmont Ave. & Horticultural Dr.  
A huge park that's a great place to get lost in, featuring colonial mansions, barns, sculptures, and the Please Touch and Rodin Museums. A good escape from the city streets.  
fairmountpark.org

**First Unitarian Church**

2125 Chestnut St.  
From crusty festivals to noise shows to punk-rock flea markets and record fairs, this church not only has an active congregation but an important place in the local rock landscape. Showtimes vary; check the R5 Productions website for upcoming events.  
r5productions.com

**Franklin Square**

200 N. 6th St.  
A historic square that's now home to an old-fashioned carousel, a burger joint, and an 18-hole City of Philadelphia mini-golf course that includes miniature models of the LOVE statue.  
historicphiladelphia.org

**Kelly Pool**

4231 N. Concourse Dr.  
Somehow no one but the neighborhood kids know about this awesome outdoor public pool with tons of lawn space to stretch out on. Summer only.  
phila.gov

**Kimmel Center**

300 S. Broad St.  
An amazing live performance center. Get dressed up, have a few drinks, and take a date to the symphony to rub

elbows with Philadelphia's wealthy elite. Check website for showtimes.  
kimmelcenter.org

**Magic Gardens**

1022 South St.  
Mosaic maker Isiah Zagar's life work is this sprawling, surrealist, tiled gallery and outdoor garden, with everything from bottles to bicycle tires to toys entombed in concrete.  
philadelphiamagicgardens.org

**The Mann Center**

5201 Parkside Ave.  
A large outdoor venue that's notably home to the Philadelphia Orchestra's summer season: \$10 for lawn seats; bring a blanket, picnic basket, and wine. Check website for shows.  
manncenter.org

**Mutter Museum**

19 S. 22nd St.  
A legendary museum of the weird and wonderful, featuring surgical tools and medical specimens, such as a preserved colon and conjoined twins, plus a 2,000-item collection of objects that have been swallowed.  
coliphil.org/mutter.asp

**North Bowl**

909 N. 2nd St.  
A lounge and classic bowling alley revamped with a mid-century modern flair. Decent prices on games, good drink specials, and snacks make sure this place gets packed with under-30s indulging in one of America's favorite pastimes.  
northbowphilly.com

**Please Touch Museum**

4231 Avenue of the Republic  
Want a good excuse to call in sick on Monday? Swap some germs touching all the cool exhibits at this kid-centric museum.  
pleasetouchmuseum.org

**Rodin Museum**

Benjamin Franklin Pkwy. and 22nd St.  
Dedicated to the sculptor Auguste Rodin, this museum boasts an original version of "The Thinker" out front, and only one of three "La Porte de l'Enfer" statues in the world. Can be a good place for reflection early in the week, or during one of their free tours (at 1:30 daily).  
rodinmuseum.org

**Wagner Free Institute of Science**

1700 W. Montgomery Ave.  
Displaying William Wagner's massive scientific collection from the late 1800s, the Institute is a step back in time where you can peruse row after row of carefully labeled fossils, minerals, skeletons, skulls, and skins.  
wagnerfreeinstitute.org



DEV79 AND STARKEY TAKE THE  
SOUND OF THE PHILLY STREETS  
WORLDWIDE.

# Gutter Twins

WORDS BEN ZOLTOWSKI

The everything-but-the-kitchen-sink aesthetic that DJs/producers Gair "Dev79" Marking and PJ "Starkey" Geissinger call "street bass" combines touches of Dirty South hip-hop, grime, Miami bass drops, glitched-out sex funk, dubstep, and dancehall—yet the two City of Liberty gents still have a way of making the sound a regional one. Having coined the genre is one thing, but through their own Seclusiasis and Slit Jockey imprints, Philly club night Get In, and regular sets across the globe, they've elevated the sound to worldwide status, bringing some much-deserved attention to their city. Here, the pair ponders Philly's club atmosphere, what exactly happened to grime, and where to get the best watermelon ale in Philly.

#### XLR8R: WHAT'S THE STORY BEHIND THE TERM "STREET BASS"?

**Starkey:** Well, Dev79 was definitely the one that came up with the name, and we basically just thought it was a great phrase for what we did. We came up with the idea of putting it on a party flier and seeing what people thought—and people would actually show up to a party that just said "street bass" on it.

**Dev79:** As far as a description of the sound, though, for the uninitiated, it's more of a club sound mixed with urban music. Hip-hop, R&B, reggae, vocal bass... all fucked up together with forward-moving dance music. And clearly with a heavy bass element.

#### WERE THERE PHILLY PARTIES THAT WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN GETTING YOU TWO TOGETHER?

**Dev79:** For two years we did a party called Get In, which, in America, was the first monthly to feature grime. There was dubstep, ghetttotech, and hip-hop, but grime was the main push we were going

for—it being kind of this new thing. That party was pretty instrumental for me and Starkey really coming together, and was the impetus behind Seclusiasis and Slit Jockey and the whole street bass movement.

#### CREATIVELY, IT'S SEEMED TO WORK, BUT WAS IT ALSO A WISE BUSINESS MOVE TO BECOME A TEAM?

**Dev79:** Well, we're sittin' here looking at each other, so if we say no, then... [*laughs*]. We grew together on certain levels and certain things kind of just came naturally and just developed—so I do think it was a wise thing... I'm still here working with him. But it just kind of happened and it worked and it's gonna continue working.

**Starkey:** When we first met each other we were talking and Dev was like, "What kind of music are you into?" and I said, "I'm really into this music called grime right now," and he's like, "No shit, I thought I was the only guy that knew what grime was!" And that's really how we became friends. We didn't know anyone else who was into that music—and we both had different ways of how we came into it. From there, the Get In party came about and everything kind of blossomed.

#### CAN YOU DIFFERENTIATE SECLUSIASIS AND SLIT JOCKEY FOR US?

**Starkey:** Basically, Seclusiasis is kind of like the parent company, the big organization, and then we have our [Slit Jockey] label under Seclusiasis, which tends to be stuff that's more all over the place. A little bit more club music-oriented and less about grime and dubstep and U.K.-influenced music.

#### WHAT'S THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SECLUSIASIS/SLIT JOCKEY AND NYC'S TROUBLE & BASS CREW?

**Starkey:** We're really good friends with those guys. We're kind of the bastard family members. We were

doing stuff with Drop the Lime and AC Slater prior to all this street bass, and prior to Trouble & Bass really *being* Trouble & Bass. Back in the day we were all kind of dabbling in electronic music—be it like breakcore or electronica or hip-hop, we've just been good friends with those guys for years. And yeah, you see a little bit of incestuous behavior—they're a different organization but we obviously feel like we're doing similar things.

PHILLY



#### DO YOU TWO TRY AND REMAIN EXCLUSIVE TO PHILLY AND THE U.S.? OR DO HAVE PLANS TO GO GLOBAL WITH ALL THESE PROJECTS?

**Starkey:** We started here and Philly's our home, but we've got people everywhere. BD1982—a strong Seclusiasis member—is living in Tokyo right now, Kotchy is in Brooklyn, we released some stuff under Slit Jockey by DZ, who's now out in San Francisco but he's originally from Canada. So we are branching out globally, but our home base is Philly.

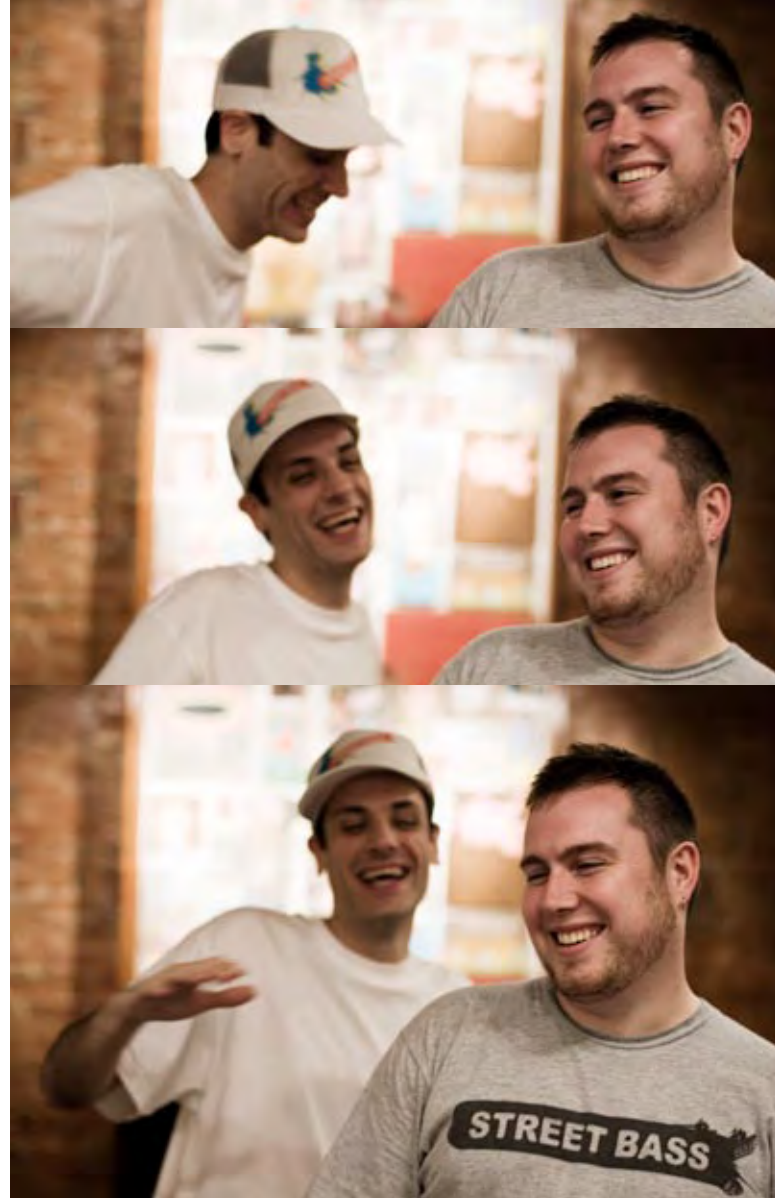
#### DO YOU FEEL LIKE THERE'S A "PHILLY SOUND" HAPPENING RIGHT NOW IN THE UNDERGROUND?

**Dev79:** Well, I think if you go up to New York, there's a real similar vibe going on right now—and there's always a symbiotic relationship between Philly and New York. But certainly over the last six months, I have noticed a steady incline of interest in dubstep. **Starkey:** One thing that goes along with our whole street bass idea is that we've always been pushing

vocals and a lot of dance music, especially right now—a lot of it's not vocal-driven. Our music with the Seclusiasis stuff and the *Street Bass Anthems* series—it's really heavily vocal-based.

**Dev79:** Partially, we feel that the vocalist aesthetic that we've always been akin to comes from the fact that Philly is such a heavy vocal city, from soul music to hip-hop. It contributes to our love and interest in using vocals to such a heavy extent. **Starkey:** Also, we don't really keep the street bass sound to a specific bpm. Yeah, we all dabble in





different bpm's, but we kind of let everyone do their own thing. So there's more of an attitude that defines the sound.

**EVER SINCE BURIAL BECAME THIS KIND OF DUBSTEP DEITY, THERE SEEMS TO BE A LEAN TOWARDS MORE HEADPHONE-ORIENTED PRODUCTION—FLOATING POINTS, JOY ORBISON, ETC. EVEN [STARKEY'S] EPHEMERAL EXHIBITS HAS A MOODINESS TO IT. IS THIS A DIRECTION EITHER OF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN REALLY DELVING INTO?**

**Starkey:** We're both different producers than we are DJs, but I don't shun anything. It's whatever you're feeling in the studio, but in the club, our shit is way energetic. I'm a sweaty bastard when I play live. It's intense. Dubstep, for me, is not club music. It's not what I want to hear in a club. Anything where someone says to me, "this is deep," I probably won't play it in a club. That's just not my thing and I don't think it's *our* thing in general.

**SO, NOT LIKELY THAT WE'LL BE STANDING STILL WITH OUR HANDS IN OUR POCKETS AT YOUR SHOWS, WATCHING YOU ON YOUR LAPTOPS ANYTIME SOON, EH?**

**Starkey:** [laughs] Nah, it's not about meditation.

**AS FAR AS GRIME GOES, IT HAD THIS SURGE A FEW YEARS BACK BUT IT'S SINCE COOLED OFF PRETTY SIGNIFICANTLY... WOULD YOU ARGUE AGAINST THAT?**

**Dev79:** It definitely had a peak and a valley... and then a fall-off. It's still going on and there's still good stuff out there to pay attention to, but there isn't nearly the scene there once was. Some of the promise has fizzled.

**Dev79:** I think it imploded on itself due to being too "in-scene." Just not enough growth and acceptance of people outside this small region.

**WITH A PROJECT LIKE MAJOR LAZER—AND REALLY, DIPLO'S ENTIRE MAD DECENT CREW—ELEMENTS OF DANCEHALL AND REGGAE ARE APPROPRIATED AND THE SOUND'S NOW GAINED A WHOLE NEW AUDIENCE. DO YOU THINK THIS COULD GO THE SAME WAY GRIME DID?**

**Dev79:** Well, it's all about crossover. Taking elements of grime, dubstep, house, reggae, and kind of bringing it all together—that's been going on for years. And right now we're seeing a real peak in the crossover of electronic and traditional dancehall.

**Starkey:** Dancehall in its infancy had the chance of going the way of grime, but it stuck there, and the same with hip-hop. I mean, people thought hip-hop was gonna be a fad and was just gonna die.

**Dev79:** I think what's going on now is you're seeing somewhat of a beautiful harmony in the bastardization. There's so much crossover, so much cross-pollination. It's like, "What genre is it that we're talking about?" That's part of the reason we came up with "street bass." Because, what is it? It's *all* of these things—and we're seeing the lines blurred.

**AS FAR AS PHILLY PARTIES GO, WHAT SHOULD WE BE HITTING UP?**

**Starkey:** We've been throwing some parties at this club called 941 Theater. It's relatively new on the Philly scene. That seems to be kind of a new hub for Seclusiasis' activity in the city right now. We're doing a party in September called Who Run It—it's all over the place. Though in Philly in general, the club scene is constantly changing. Clubs are closing, clubs are coming up. I think it's a rough DJ town in general, that's my raw feeling.

**IF YOU TWO WERE TO PLAY PHILLY TRAVEL AGENTS FOR A SECOND, WHERE WOULD YOU TELL US WE HAVE TO GO?**

**Starkey:** My favorite thing to do is go to brunch at The Abbaye in North Liberties. I'm not sponsored by them, but I do wish they'd give me free food every time I went there. It's really, really good. Like good pub breakfast food and all these Belgian ales, pumpkin ales, watermelon ale—it's all over the place.

**Dev79:** Well, I'm definitely a food nerd—and if you want a different cheesesteak-type thing go to Gourmet To Go—it's this vegan spot. They got this wheat-chicken cheesesteak that's bangin'—and I eat chicken, but this thing tastes better than chicken.

**WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON FOR DEV79 & STARKEY?**

**Dev79:** We've got BD1982, who's been down with our crew. He's got a single out in September and probably a full-length around November. He takes dubstep in a more organic, tribal direction.

**Starkey:** We'll have remixes for it coming from Slugabed and Hobotron. We're always trying to branch out and pick up some different people. And we're both working on records. And we have *Street Bass Anthems Vol. 4* that's gonna be dropping mid-October.

**YOU'VE RELEASED 12-INCHES WHERE ONE OF YOU DOES A SIDE-A TRACK AND THE OTHER DOES A SIDE-B, BUT WILL THERE EVER BE A FULL-LENGTH COLLABORATION? LIKE THE HALL & OATES OF STREET BASS RECORDS?**

**Dev79:** You might have just had an epiphany for us! We never thought of that parallel!

**Starkey:** We might actually open for them on their next tour!

**Dev79:** We can dress up like Hall & Oates...

**Starkey:** I can take my shirt off and show my chest hair...

**Dev79:** And I can grow the mustache.

seclusiasis.com

# PHILLY Weird Mess

WORDS JOSIAH HUGHES



PISSED JEANS

GETTING DEEP WITH PHILADELPHIA'S HARD-TO-PIN-DOWN NOISE-PUNK UNDERGROUND.

While messy, smarmy post-punk isn't necessarily the first thing one might associate with Philadelphia, the city's western underbelly is home to a group of distinctly individual artists making some seriously messed-up jams. But trying to pin down a singular regional noise-punk sound doesn't come easy. "The sound of a cheesesteak being grilled up at 2 a.m. at Geno's or Pat's is pretty identifiable as a Philly sound," says James J. Vail, a member of FNU Ronnies. "...People incessantly yelling, honking, telling each other off on the streets."

"Our environment is totally an influence," explains Pissed Jeans frontman Matt Korvette. "We couldn't fight it if we tried. It can be a kind of rude place, with lots of well-intentioned people throughout, which can make for an interesting mix."

The Philly punk underground plays host to bands united more by a generally bleak outlook than a specific sound. From FNU Ronnies' bizarre post-

hardcore through dreary synth-pop un-romantics Cold Cave, highly offensive, now-defunct instigators Clockcleaner, and the maniacal Pissed Jeans, the city produces some gloriously negative music. (And has for years, with a DIY punk hall of fame that includes early hardcore pioneers YDI, Flag of Democracy, and The Dead Milkmen.)

For Vail, Philadelphia would be best left off the map. "There are more interesting towns or cities in the States that have more of a specific identity that creates a unique sound. Places like Columbus, Ohio put Philly to shame," he claims. Vail sees Philadelphia's few decent punk bands as a response to the general void of having one specific scene. "[With] a lack of quality bands comes the need to make better ones," he explains in his typically negative tone. "Necessity is the mother of invention, which enables a virulent paradigm shift that jettisoned itself away from the status quo. Also, boredom and the huge amount of insanity that

permeates like incestuous wildfire throughout the city is quite nurturing."

Another thing nurturing bands, however, is their opportunity to perform. While many cities struggle to find the space for their *avant garde* noiseniks, Philly has an abundance. "There are a pretty wide variety of venues to play in this city," explains Korvette. "No matter how bad your band is, there is a place you can perform for the public, which I suppose is ultimately a good thing."

In his own way, Vail echoes the idea that the city has developed its own breed of weird punk. "Philly made us what we are," he comments. "If we came from another city we'd sound exactly like the Vivian Girls and be more concerned with our image, as opposed to doing something new and productive."

myspace.com/fnuronnies, whitedenim.com/pissedjeans



# High Steaks

BEAT KING **RJD2** GOES IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT PHILLY CHEESESTEAK.

WORDS AND PHOTO RJD2



PHILLY

The cheesesteak is so ubiquitous in Philly that the mere mention of it by tourists or visitors often illicit much eyerolling from locals.

And yet, I have also seen heated debates over whose steak trumps the hardest—granted, the subtext of these arguments seems to stem more from “I would like to fight you right now, please” than the actual merits of a sandwich. In short, everybody here has their preference. For me, the question was rendered obsolete the first time I set mouth upon a Tommy Dinic’s sandwich.

But first, a disclaimer: I’m not a “true” Philadelphian; I’m a transient. I was born in Oregon, raised in Columbus, Ohio, lived shortly in San Francisco, and moved to Philadelphia in 2002. While this may seem trivial, it’s critical to the perspective on which this entire piece rests. Technically speaking, a Philly cheesesteak is thinly sliced, frozen beef cooked on a grill and served on an Italian roll—as it has been explained to me. All the steak places in Philly open this up to include chicken, veggie meat, and possibly other variations on the concept, along with your choice of cheese (Whiz, American, provolone, etc.) and toppings (sautéed peppers, onions, mushrooms, etc.). Tommy Dinic’s serves pork—both pulled

and roast brisket, and scallopine. There is only one cheese—a sharp provolone that has as much bite as any sharp cheese I’ve tasted. Toppings are broccoli rabe (which seems to be braised or sautéed in liberal amounts of garlic), spinach, peppers, and raw onion. In short, the menu could be written on the back of your hand. The average cheesesteak joint has a menu with rows and columns.

A little backstory: For my first five years here, I made my way through the iconic steak joints. Jim’s on South always had a rank smell to the outside, although the food was passable. Geno’s struck me as the equivalent of rot-gut whiskey on bread. Iskabibbles wasn’t half bad. And for several years, I had arrived at the conclusion that Tony Luke’s was, hands-down, the best cheesesteak in Philly (one could make the argument it still is, on technical merits). The problem is that one day about 18 months ago, I set foot in Tommy Dinic’s at the Reading Terminal Market (12th and Arch Streets) and got the pulled pork. That experience effectively exiled me from anywhere else that sold meat on a piece of bread in Philly. A big part of this was the afterglow; when I produced a song for Jack Panate, and his crew flew out here, I took them to Tony Luke’s. While they enjoyed the food, the inevitable reckoning came an hour later—bricks in the gut. It always happened to me at those places as well. Dinic’s sandwiches lack this unwelcome aftereffect. Firstly, their ingredients are culled from vendors in the market. It’s less of a soupy mess than most steaks. I have probably eaten 30 pulled

pork sandwiches, and maybe one or two times was the preparation less than perfect. Both the brisket and pork (especially pulled) are moist, somewhat lean, and just taste amazing. The combination of the cheese’s sharpness, and the almost earthy flavor of the pork, along with a warm, slightly crisped-edge roll is just fantastic. Of all the toppings, I strongly suggest the broccoli rabe with raw onions; the onions are chopped finely enough that they absorb a bit of the juices of the meat and almost caramelize a bit, while the rabe provides a just a slightly bitter flavor to the richness of the meat.

You can come to Philly and have the kind of experience that your local Fox News affiliate briefed you on—get drunk and fight someone at a Phillies game, eat a greasy steak amidst the chaos of a Saturday night in South Philly, and throw your trash out the window on the Gray’s Ferry Bridge. Instead, I implore you to do the things that people here like to do, but nobody talks about: visit a world-class art museum, tour the cities’ 19th century Victorian architecture, and eat the best Italian sandwich of your life at Tommy Dinic’s.

Tommy Dinic’s is at 1136 Arch Street in Philadelphia.

RJD2’s *The Colossus* arrives this winter, and his 2002-2010 boxed set is out Oct. 20, both on RJ’s Electrical Connections. [myspace.com/rjd2](http://myspace.com/rjd2)

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# I Can't Kick This Feeling When It Hits.

*DIRECTOR* [TOM WINCHESTER](#) *STYLIST* [KELLY BROWN](#) *HAIR* [JEAN-MARC](#) *MAKEUP* [DANA JAMES](#)

*LIGHTING TECHNICIAN* [JON CARROLL](#) *PHOTO ASSISTANT* [CLAY RODERY](#)

*STYLIST ASSISTANT* [TAMMIE FOSSACECA](#), [NICOLE PORTERA](#)

*MODEL* [ANASTASIA](#) AT WOMEN DIRECT [YULIA](#) AT MARILYN

SHOT AT [HEATHERS](#) IN NYC





PREVIOUS SPREAD:  
ANASTASIA WEARS  
GOLD STRAPLESS GOWN BY [LELA ROSE](#),  
GOLD AND LUCITE EARRINGS BY [EYE](#),  
GOLD CLUTCH BY [SIR ALISTAIR RAI](#)

RIGHT:  
ANASTASIA WEARS WHITE LACE ROBE BY  
[HANKY PANKY](#), EARRINGS BY [EYE CANDY](#)  
[VINTAGE](#), BLACK SKIRT BY [LA ROK](#)







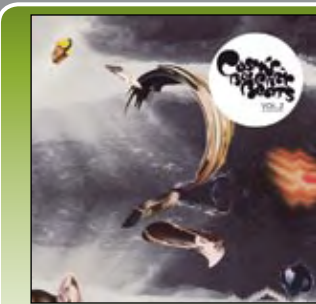
**2562**  
*Unbalance* CD/3LP

The follow-up to 2562's highly-acclaimed debut is an exceptional body of electronic music that pushes the boundaries of dubstep. "In his unique marriage of dub bass and minimal techno timing, he reveals a world where Dr. Alex Patterson met Burial at Laurent Garnier's studio over tea." —Popmatters



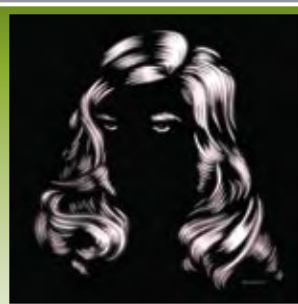
**CROOKERS**  
*I Love Techno 2009* CD

2009's edition of Lektroluv's essential series features the talents and tastes of insanely-hot Italian DJ duo Crookers. Pairing up emerging, bass-heavy sounds with quality house, this incredible mix of tracks includes appearances from Zomby, Osborne, Untold, Photek, Skream and many more.



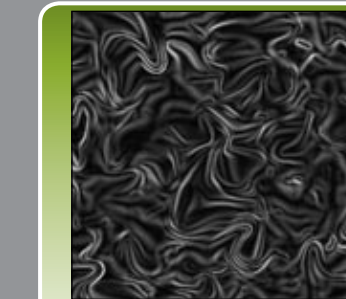
**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
*Cosmic Balearic Beats Vol. 2* 2CD

Prins Thomas fans take note: the second installment in a series dedicated to cosmic Balearic beats features a beautiful, sun-kissed mix of cosmic house, disco, and funk from Mugwump, Rayko, Phelps and more. Includes a bonus mp3-disc featuring the full-length versions of all the tracks.



**GUS GUS**  
*24/7* CD/2LP

One of the most well-known electronic music acts in history, Gus Gus release their first album on Kompakt. With vocals by Daniel Ágúst Haraldsson and Jimi Tenor atop rhythmic synth pulses and analog climaxes, 24/7 is the band's most impressive release to date. Includes the hit single "Add This Song."



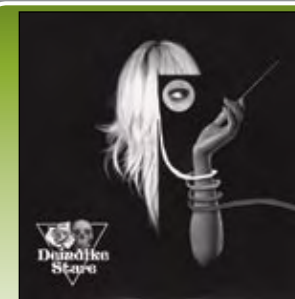
**BRUCE GILBERT**  
*Oblivio Agitatum* CD

Editions Mego's brand new album from the UK's legendary experimental noise musician Bruce Gilbert, a founding member of Wire, is a startling and mesmerizing work of obscure tones and highly-structured confusion. A stunning return from this still vital pioneer.



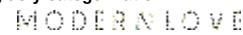
**RUSSELL HASWELL**  
*Wild Tracks* CD

The UK's multidisciplinary artist Russell Haswell (Gescom) documents a wide variety of "deliberate recordings," including the sounds of ant colonies, wasp nests, military aircraft and flies being electrocuted. Specially packaged with detailed liner notes, this CD is unlike anything you've ever heard.



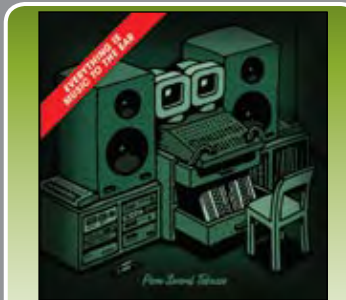
**DEMDIKE STARE**  
*Symbiosis* CD

This long-in-the-making hook-up between Miles Whittaker (Pendle Coven, MLZ) and Sean Cauty (Finders Keepers) presents an album drawing from elements of Norwegian drone records, classic house templates, punctured dub and modified techno. The pair's extensive musical knowledge results in a set of tracks that, quite brilliantly, defy categorization.



**ROY DAVIS JR.**  
*God Life Music* CD

From electro-'80s flavors to cool R&B and Chicago house, the debut full-length from dance music legend Roy Davis Jr. (Phuture) overflows with his trademarked brand of heartfelt, soulful grooves. Includes the dancefloor-smash "I Have A Vision (feat. Erin Martin)" and guest vocalists Khalid and Terry Dexter.



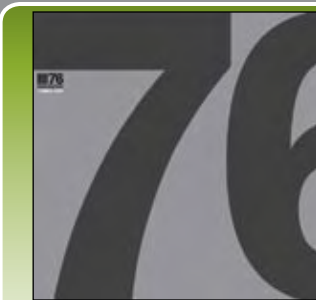
**PORN SWORD TOBACCO**  
*Everything Is Music To The Ear* CD/LP

The fourth album from Henrik Jonsson aka Porn Sword Tobacco is his most mesmerizing release yet, navigating a dreamy escapism between retro avant-rock and ambient-pop. "...his richest record to date... perfecting his trapeze act from heartbreak to farce as neatly as he's ever attempted." —Cokemachineglow



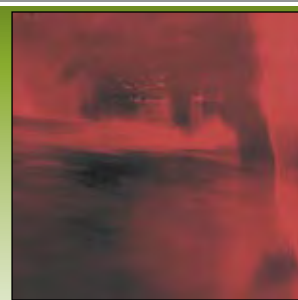
**SCHLACHTHOFBRONX**  
*Schlachthofbronx* CD/LP

The music from Munich trio Schlachthofbronx is a sick mixture nobody else has ever tried before, involving Brazilian baile funk, American bootybass, UK dubstep and African kuduro. Includes guest appearances from artists such as Ete Kelly, Doubla J, Mic Moe and Ron Foto.



**SHACKLETON**  
*Three EPs* CD/3x12

With seriously deep bass lines and tribal percussion, Skull Disco co-founder Sam Shackleton has carved out his own brand of dubwise eclecticism, and his debut for the Perlon label is another milestone. "The doom-laden Shackleton trademark sound is still plastered over the nine tracks." —Resident Advisor



**SIMON SCOTT**  
*Navigare* CD/LP

After his work as a member of Seavault and collaborations with Machinefabriek and Jasper TX, Simon Scott takes a bold new direction. *Navigare* shares an affinity with the melodic content of Fennesz, the dark beauty of Tim Hecker and the restraint of Andrew Chalk.



# ALBUM REVIEWS

09/09



ANTI-POP CONSORTIUM PHOTO: JOSEPH YOON

## ANTI-POP CONSORTIUM

### *Fluorescent Black*

Big Dada/UK/CD



NEW YORK'S EDGY HIP-HOP COLLECTIVE REUNITES TO TRY FOR MORE MINIMAL, BLADERUNNER-WITH-BEATS RAP FUTURISM.

Part of the millennial hip-hop *avant garde* that included groups like dAlek and Company Flow, Anti-Pop Consortium paired Earl Blaze's dystopian, mechanical beats with a trio of steely, free-associating MCs who crammed complex wordplay into three-minute tracks. It wasn't always a formula for laughs, but on their last and best album, 2002's *Arrhythmia*, they showed they weren't too forward-thinking to be self-aware and self-deprecating. On the skit "Tron Man Speaks," a robot calls into Earl Blaze's radio show to play a single from his album, *Tron Man Stigmata*—basically processed static from an old Victrola—then gets testy when he thinks Blaze would prefer something "more R&B... something more for the females."

Now reunited after its 2002 breakup, the underground rap crew returns with *Fluorescent Black*, a set of anxious electronic rhythms, technospeak, and knotty boasts. But joking about experimental leanings might not be as funny, since the future may have caught up with the forward-thinking New Yorkers. By their own standards, they haven't taken a great leap forward sonically, instead becoming a more self-conscious and focused unit. While it's tempting to imagine what next-level bangers they could aspire to, it's also somewhat refreshing to hear them develop their angular music past the beta stage. They're ostensibly still looking ahead, but with a bit of a retro-futuristic tinge.

There's still plenty of abstraction, including the minimal march of "Timpani," the digitized sludge of "Dragunov," and the title track, which makes a chorus of squeegee-

sharp synth licks sound like a nest of chirping machines. But while *Arrhythmia* was marked by negative space and a sense of refined chill, the tracks on *Fluorescent Black* are more crowded and busy. The anxious beat of "New Jack Exterminator" competes with various strains of mechanical noise, and "Reflections" runs through arpeggiated synths before dropping into swirling riffs and drums that recall The Roots.

On the vocal front, M. Sayyid, High Priest, and Beans attack the mic more strategically here, rarely overflowing with words, as though they're trying to cram a Nabokov novel's worth of references and allusions into a Dan Brown paperback. During a time when Kanye West gets hard for Daft Punk robot masks and arguably the biggest and best in the game, Lil Wayne, raps about being from Mars and eating rivals, being a robot-loving, abstract rapper isn't quite the mark of distinction it once was. But APC's staccato flow can rifle through songs like "Capricorn One," and the steady grind on "Superunfrontable" compliments the track's musical backdrop, a fat synth note that sounds like rubber melting.

Perhaps the group is making up for lost time, as the album feels a bit overstuffed and can drag at points. Tepid selections like "The Solution" and "Born Electric"—which includes a finger-tapping guitar riff and a terrible ballad that's hopefully a joke—overindulge the robot fetish. It's great to hear Anti-Pop Consortium return hungry, but it's going to be difficult for them to push the boundaries that they had a large role in drawing. *Patrick Sisson*





## GUSGUS

24/7

Kompakt / CD / GER

On their sixth studio album, GusGus' love of swelling euphoria remains intact, even if they have tempered their sound a bit to match the subtle climaxes of their new-found Kompakt labelmates. Each track on the six-song album hints at Balearic release, only to pull back just before climaxing and instead settle into a minimal groove—it's a tough trick, yet GusGus pulls it off with aplomb. Songs like "Thin Ice" and "On the Job" (the album's title is drawn from the song's excellently silly chorus) are particularly adept examples of party music written with an ear for detail and subtlety—this is what Tiga might sound like if he spent a little less time looking in the mirror. While it may sound like GusGus has suddenly become a "serious" outfit, *24/7* is no drab affair—it's the sort of record that works at home or in the club. *Tyler McCauley*

### A PLACE TO BURY STRANGERS

#### EXPLODING HEAD

Mute/US/CD

The press promptly hailed A Place to Bury Strangers as "the loudest band in New York" when the trio released its self-titled debut in 2007—quite a compliment considering the masses of sonic terrorists lining up to play Brooklyn's DIY venues. Now with *Exploding Head*, APTBS has refined its industrial shoegaze into something more tuneful, but no less brutal. Actual songs peek out from under the great morass of singer Oliver Ackermann's scathing guitars. "Keep Slipping Away" and "Exploding Head"—held aloft by a newly invigorated rhythm section—are as danceable as they are hummable. Loud isn't the half of it. *John S.W. MacDonald*

### BROTHER ALI

#### US

Rhymesayers/US/CD

If there were any justice in this world, Brother Ali would be a solid contender for the title of greatest rapper alive. Working with the same producer (Atmosphere's Ant) for most of his career has bolstered Ali's already-consistent output, and his latest release, *Us*, is quality from top to bottom, as Ali vacillates between boastful jabs, message-mongering uppercuts, storytelling segments, and spiritual revelations. Meanwhile, the beats range from uptempo slams and funky, bouncy head-nodders to neo-exotica and retro-gospel. If you're new to Ali's flow, it's one of the most honest, lyrically engaging out there. The guy probably couldn't make a bad album or spit a wack verse if he tried. *Eric K. Arnold*

### CHICO SONIDO

#### CHICO SONIDO

Nettwerk-Kin Kon/US/CD

*Cumbia* is a hot sound right now, so Chico Sonido could have easily turned out a blogger-friendly album of bass-heavy refixes and *cumbia*-meets-hip-hop mash-ups. But on his self-titled debut full-length, the Mexican-born producer—who currently resides in Los Angeles—has decided to dig a whole lot deeper, specifically into crates of psychedelic rock, funk, soul, and a myriad of Latin beats. Slow burners like "Antes Que Nadie" and "En Mis Sueños" recall mid-'90s Mo'Wax, but *Chico Sonido* is much more than an exercise in vintage breaks worship. "Bikinis y Rock" is a wah-wah guitar workout, while "Más Discotheque" and "Loverboy" resuscitate the uptempo party stylings of big beat, albeit with some distinctive Latin flair. *Shawn Reynaldo*

### DINKY

#### ANEMIK

Wagon Repair/CAN/CD

Ignore the title—the blood isn't weak here. Suave microhouse rhythms, fluid synth riffs, and rickety percussive hits flow through the heart of this album by Chilean-Berliner Alejandra Iglesias. She has a great habit of losing her vocals in the machine—exhibit A is "Skyped," where her

vowels splinter and dissipate into a mess of polyrhythms. Other trips down the rabbit hole include the psychedelic bebop jaunt "Westoid Feat Updates" and the Neubauten-like industrial grind of "Fadik." Despite a few uninspired synth instrumentals, Iglesias' courage in tossing in abrupt twists and clangs into her rhythms is quite welcome in a time when stale and, well, anemic minimal records keep piling up. *Cameron Macdonald*

### EL PERRO DEL MAR

#### LOVE IS NOT POP

The Control Group/US/CD

Sarah Assbring takes a break from the baroque Spectorian pop of her first two LPs on *Love Is Not Pop*, which was produced with assistance from Rasmus Hägg, one half of balearic duo Studio. Puffs of Ibiza air don't do much to remedy Assbring's permanently inconsolable mood, though the scenarios are less coded than in the past—"Gotta Get Smart" opens the album with Assbring setting up a lover for a dumping apparently long in the making. Wading through the responsibility of being the dumper rather than the dumpee means that the most fascinating moments here are the slighter ones. "Let Me In" is the album's most sublime moment, with Assbring's voice lurching ahead, wrapped in a zero-gravity production style that wouldn't be out of place on Arthur Russell's *Calling Out of Context*. *Brandon Bussolini*

### FELIX DA HOUSECAT

#### HE WAS KING

Nettwerk/CAN/CD

Electroclash godfather Felix da Housecat supposedly wanted *He Was King* to be more pop than his past albums. He succeeded—kind of. Sure, the tracks are accessible, but they're also undemanding; the music is fun, but a little disposable. The bouncy beat and breathy vocals on "Plastik Fantastik," for example, get boring fast. Contrast that with the outstanding "Kickdrum," which is thick, textured, and flat-out gorgeous. "Do We Move Your World" is a light-hearted, shimmering synth-pop confection and while the buzzy, beat-driven "LA Ravers" will never make it onto Ryan Seacrest's Top 40, plenty of pop goodness lies within. *Luciana Lopez*

### FOOL'S GOLD

#### FOOL'S GOLD

IAMSOUND/US/CD

Los Angeles group Fool's Gold's indie-pop/African music sees globalization and the internet forging another successful cross-cultural artistic experiment. They have company—Afrobeat bands like S.F.'s Afrodesia, NY's Antibalas, Chicago/Kenyan Benga project Extra Golden, and even high-profile act Vampire Weekend represent a new wave of Americans bringing the Mother Continent's music to crusty festival goers. But unlike the 1980s "world music" movement abetted by Peter Gabriel's Real World label and releases on Shanachie, today's ethno-fusionists strive for authentic arrangements without sacrificing decidedly personal



## MARY ANNE HOBBS

*Wild Angels*

Planet Mu/US/CD

Filled with buoyant beats, 8-bit shoot-outs, and pastel-funky melodies, Mary Anne Hobbs' latest compilation contains everything you'd expect from the British tastemaker's broadcast, minus her ecstatic voiceovers. Connecting different strata of bass music, Hobbs showcases some of its more colorful, glittering strains, including Gemmy's "Rainbow Road" and Nosaj Thing's "IOIO," both breezy, neon gems. Gradually raising and lowering the energy level, Hobbs bookends *Wild Angels* with Marc Pritchard's dark and desolate "?" and an unexpectedly folksy Sunken Foal track before signing off with Legion of Doom's frazzled "And Now We Wait." Hobbs manages the delicate task of balancing the light and dark, not letting heavyweight dub pull down her more airy selections. It's impossible to replicate the impact of *Warrior Dubz* (her first mix for Planet Mu), but Hobbs curates an impressive overview of a scene she helped foment. *Patrick Sisson*

aesthetics. Hence, FG supplants Hebrew lyrics into the bittersweet Malian blues arrangement of "Ha Dvash" while "Momentary Shelter" sounds like Pavement jamming with Konono N°1. The album's excellent musicianship and cheery exuberance will win over even skeptical global traditionalists. *Tomas Palermo*

### HEALTH

#### GET COLOR

Lovepump United/US/CD

If HEALTH's self-titled debut was a warning flare, then consider *Get Color* an all-out aerial assault. The L.A. Smell veterans have always been impressively noisy, but the band's sophomore effort finds them wielding all their fuzz, static, and sonic squall in the service of potent and powerful songs. Guitars are razor-sharp and distortion-heavy. Thunderous drums and menacing electronics recall the fury of '80s industrial. Where the ethereal vocals were once swallowed up in aural mayhem, they now woosily float along and provide an effective counterpoint to all the cacophony. From the aggressive opening notes of "In Heat" to the infectious bombast of "Die Slow" and "We are Water" to the shoegazing dirge of album closer "In Violet," *Get Color* is a beast. *Shawn Reynaldo*

### IVAN SMAGGHE

#### LIVE AT ROBERT JOHNSON VOLUME 3

Live at Robert Johnson/GER/CD

As a former member of the genre-bending Black Strobe, Ivan Smagghe's contribution to the popular Robert Johnson mix series suitably features an eclectic selection of different dance music styles, from the hypnotic minimal sexiness of the Wighnomy Brothers to the campy disco revival of In Flagranti. While employing this sort of catholic selecting technique is laudable, the individual tracks here have such personality that the overall feel is one of scattered incohesiveness. It's not that the tracks aren't mixed well—they're mixed expertly, in fact—but all of the pieces are so big and different that they cancel each other out. Smagghe is an excellent DJ, but this mix is not his best work. *Thomas Rees*



### JAH DAN BLAKKAMOORE

#### BUZZROCK WARRIOR

Gold Dust/US/CD

*Buzzrock Warrior* certainly sports an impressive resume. Largely produced by Dutty Artz head honchos Matt Shadetek and DJ /rupture, the album features high-profile guest appearances from grime don Durrty Goodz and fellow Brooklyn dancehall up-and-comer 77Klash, not to mention production work from Modeselektor, Jammer, Maga Bo, and Chancha Via Circuito. Yet even with all those top-notch contributors and bits of dubstep, *cumbia*, and tropical bass sprinkled about, some folks may be a bit disappointed to find that *Buzzrock Warrior* is not some sort of next-level, off-the-wall reggae/dancehall experience. That's not a bad thing—if anything, the producers have taken a backseat to Jahan himself, as his melodic croons and surprisingly sonorous growls make him the brightest star here. *August Howard*

### JOAKIM

#### MILKY WAYS

IK7/GER/CD

Given that its creator initially made a name for himself as a purveyor of lighthearted French electro-disco, it's certainly unexpected that the first eight minutes or so of *Milky Ways* are reminiscent of no one so much as Sonic Youth. At that point in the album, a manic splattering of drums finally dissolves into vocodered disco, yet it doesn't signal a return to business as usual. Seemingly operating with a philosophy of "have fun and do whatever you find interesting," Joakim

Bouaziz and his live band delightfully renege on a stated plan to create a succinct, direct album in favor of wide-eyed eclecticism and idiosyncrasy—at times his creations recall artists as disparate as The Cure, Syd Barrett, Talking Heads, Daft Punk, and The Modernist. Pleasingly playful. *David Hemingway*

### LAWRENCE

#### UNTIL THEN, GOODBYE

Mule Musiq/JPN/CD

Peter Kersten's output has never been filled with sunshine; in fact, one could argue that his oeuvre is downright melancholy, filled with minor-key melodies and sentimental chord progressions. For his latest full-length under his Lawrence moniker, Kersten continues the trend, delivering an album that is more cloudy Sunday than clubby Saturday. Tracks like "Grey Light" and "The Dream" channel Angelo Badalamenti, and "Todenhausen Blues" recalls European seaside towns awash in drizzle. There are beat-oriented moments, of course, like the hazy synth shuffle of "Jill" and the organic house stylings of "In Your Eyes," but overall, *Until Then, Goodbye*, is a gorgeous and moody trek through sonic textures that invoke intense emotions; if there was ever a perfect example of "teardrop house," Lawrence's latest would be it. *Thomas Rees*

### LUCIANO

#### TRIBUTE TO THE SUN

Cadenza/SWI/CD

On the aptly named *Tribute to the Sun*, Luciano (a.k.a. Lucien Nicolet) fleshes out sub-tropical Latin and pan-African rhythms that have always shared a tonal palette with his darker Chicago- and Detroit-inspired productions. "Celestial" sounds like it reads, with a melody (courtesy of a vocal sample from Keren Ann's "Liberty") made in heaven, pushed even higher on the back of an ascending bassline. Bruno Bieri and Omri Hason add percussive worldbeat contributions to "Hang for Bruno" and Senegal's Ali Boulo Santo lends his vocals to the ethno-tribal stomp of "Africa Sweat." And for the ravers who stick it out, there's some payoff on the back end with "Metodisma" and "Oenologue," fierce tracks peppered with zany laughter and sundry calls of the wild. *Walter Wasacz*





## JAMIE JONES

### *Don't You Remember the Future*

Crosstown Rebels/UK/CD

Even as the '80s revival has dubiously morphed from a passing fad into what seems like permanent status, every once in a while an artist proves that the neon decade still has some ore worth mining. *Don't You Remember the Future* is the debut album from U.K. retro-futurist Jamie Jones, and although it portends to be a concept album set in 2116, the music sounds a lot more like 1986, from the Prince-biting proto-rave of "Summertime" to the jackin' diva-disco of "Half Human." The Alison Mars-voiced "Absolute Zero" is a bit of a creative detour into sultry mid-'90s electronic pop—think Olive or Lamb—but then The Egyptian Lover shows up on "Galactic Space Bar" to add some electro-funk legitimacy to the proceedings. Yet *Don't You Remember the Future* is no exercise in nostalgic hackery—Jones' production sounds fresh, and taking musical cues from Cybotron is certainly no crime.

Shawn Reynaldo



Stapleton's hand with cringe-inducing moments of beatnik lounge collage, *The Surveillance Lounge* offers less in the way of surprise, but returns to the starkness and po-faced absurdity of his (*cringe*) canonical albums. Like all of NWW's best work, this is one to put on when you want to feel your room slowly close in on you. As good and familiar as that can feel, it's hard not to feel like NWW's work is a bit of a shell game at this point in Stapleton's career—though that should only add to the charm for fans. *Brandon Bussolini*

#### OOIOO ARMINICO HEWA

Thrill Jockey/US/CD

OOIOO's superkinetic music is subject to the subtle changes and smart inconsistencies of a band with enough ideas to think three albums ahead, yet focused enough to remain totally committed to the present. *Arminico Hewa* follows in the densely percussive style of 2006's *Taiga* but initially sounds a little more cluttered—the earlier album's *taiko*-like floor-tom patterns move over in favor of rushing punk snares on *AH*. But when these four ladies slow their roll, as they do on Okinawa disco jam "Honki Ponki" and during the extended post-post-rock guitar breakdown of "Uda Hah," they reveal incredible vistas that develop *Taiga*'s cosmic punk vibe even further. *Brandon Bussolini*

#### ● SALLY SHAPIRO MY GUILTY PLEASURE

Paper Bag/CAN/CD

How could anyone not like Sally Shapiro? That would be like not liking puppies or sunny days. *My Guilty Pleasure* is the second full-length from the Swedish disco darling, and it's another collection of sugary-sweet synth-disco tunes. It's not exactly clear what differentiates Miss Shapiro from international pop divas like Kylie Minogue, but it's impossible to argue with the Italo charms of "Looking at the Stars." The borrowing doesn't stop there—"Let It Show" and "Moonlight Dance" recall the midtempo bounce of Tom Tom Club, and album stand-out "Save Your Love" has an unabashed freestyle feel. *My Guilty Pleasure* may not be the most original effort, but there's a lot to love here. That Sally Shapiro is just so damn... adorable. *Shawn Reynaldo*



#### SIMIEN MOBILE DISCO TEMPORARY PLEASURE

Wichita/UK/CD

On their sophomore effort, Simian Mobile Disco has elected to attempt the dreaded "Featuring..." album, lading guest vocalists over their defiantly analog pop-techno. But after hippy-dippy opener "Cream Dream," unrelenting, quirky bangers suck the collaborators into the vortex of a hot summer night's rave—Yeasayer's Chris Keating clowns the lonely *nouveau riche* on "Audacity of Huge," Jamie Lidell gets menacingly sexy over the seasick synths of "Off the Map," and even punk princess Beth Ditto plays a perfect house diva ("Cruel Intentions"), leaving space for the acidic instrumentals to monomaniacally bang away. The aching, mysterious "Pinball," stashed right at the end, sends *Temporary Pleasure* out of the park. *Rob Geary*

#### THE VERY BEST WARM HEART OF AFRICA

Green Owl/US/CD

The Very Best may have been born in a London furniture store, but the music casts an obvious eye toward Africa. Combining the beatmaking prowess of Radioclit with the unique vocal stylings of Malawian singer Esau Mwamwaya, the project leans heavily on the West's romanticized version of African pop music and occasionally strays toward *Lion King* territory ("Yalira," "Angonde," and especially the title track, featuring an unfortunate guest appearance from Vampire Weekend frontman Ezra Koenig), but the propulsive pop of songs like "Nsokoto" and "Kada Manja" is strong enough to dash any visions of animated jungle creatures. "Chalo" and "Mfumu" are equally infectious, although the radio-ready '80s synths certainly won't help Mwamwaya escape his reputation as the "African Phil Collins." *August Howard*

#### THEMSELVES CROWNSDOWN

Anticon/US/CD

A decade after two young Oakland transplants came together as Themselves, the now-seasoned artists, MC Doseone and producer Jel, have returned from their many projects to reinvent the seminal collaboration. The resulting album is a digestibly eclectic piece of psychedelic hip-hop that easily rivals their past work. Doseone's rhymes rarely

sound more vehement and clearheaded than they do on vocal workouts "Oversleeping" and "You Ain't It," while "Roman is as Roman Does" and "Skinning the Drum" exhibit Jel's skill in fashioning both traditional beats and leftfield productions. Those who couldn't navigate the dense experimentation of the duo's debut, *Them*, but enjoyed traversing the more "accessible," atmospheric beats of Anticon supergroup Subtle, should find *CrownsDown* a greatly rewarding listen. *Patric Fallon*

#### TYONDAI BRAXTON CENTRAL MARKET

Warp/US/CD

One of four masterminds behind genre-bending powerhouse Battles, Tyondai Braxton has written and composed a modern take on classical arrangements on his sophomore solo album. Less focused on noise and loop pedals than its predecessor, *Central Market* instead relies on live instrumentation provided by Braxton and his conduction of the Wordless Music Orchestra. Compositions like lighthearted album starter "Opening Bell" and epic centerpiece "Platinum Rows" sound like futuristic renditions of *Peter and the Wolf*, and the darker "J. City" might be the first time Braxton's vocals have been the least bit intelligible. *Central Market* eventually takes a dive into sinister territory, playing with more electronics and rock instruments and sounding something like the next movement in Battles' discography. *Patric Fallon*

#### VLADISLAV DELAY TUMMAA

Leaf/UK/CD

*Tummaa* diametrically opposes Finnish producer/percussionist Sasu Ripatti's work as Luomo. Whereas that project imagines minimal, vocal-centric house as a lubricious glide through sleek clubs and luxurious boudoirs, Ripatti's new Vladislav Delay album revives his instincts as an improvising Scandinavian jazz musician. Spurning the dancefloor and the horizontal bop, *Tummaa* translates Delay's usual impressionistic, knotted strain of abstract techno into introverted jazz tropes. Ripatti daubs the stereo field with stark, beautiful, meditative tones, finessing out cerebral, cryptic slivers of ECM-style post-jazz with sporadic bursts of oddly metered, oblong beats. By looking back, Ripatti brings a new wrinkle to his oeuvre. *Dave Segal*

## NUDGE

### *As Good as Gone*

Kranky/US/CD

Dubby musical explorations don't require a full payload of bass. Brian Foote's Nudge project isn't strictly dub by any means, but his group's slow-burning electro-acoustic tracks often have that billowy feel associated with shacks-turned-studios in Jamaica. On its fourth album, the band plays with ambient sound and space and abuses delay pedals to create textured, coldly mesmerizing music. Dark tones and unraveling narratives ground these often buoyant tracks. "Two Hands" stretches out hushed drums and stringy guitar, later floating off into a sea of muted organ, bass tones and Honey Owens' far-away crooning. "Burns Blue" has a sinister-yet-breezy swagger, while "Dawn Comes Light" slowly crescendos as a spark of a guitar line turns into a conflagration of noise that consumes itself. Organic and ever-evolving, this music is anything but audio wallpaper. *Patrick Sisson*

#### ● WHITE RAINBOW NEW CLOUDS

Kranky/US/CD

Adam Forkner continues to astound on his second full-length for Kranky. The Portland resident's loop-based jams have always had a truly organic, "free" feeling, but *New Clouds* emphasizes these tonal elements while simultaneously being the best-sounding record he has ever created. With synth washes and guitar lines whipping in and out amidst Forkner's soaring vocalizations and subtle percussive elements, the music floats in the ether—a track like the epic "All the Boogies in the World" recalls traditional Irish music, Brian Eno's ambient works, Enya, fuzzed-out garage punk, Underworld, and jazz-fusion percussive styles. There is no pinning White Rainbow down, as Forkner defies easy definition in favor of creating gorgeous aural structures that uniquely bend both time and genre. *Thomas Rees*

#### WHY? ESKIMO SNOW

Anticon/US/CD

Recorded at the same time as their last album, the boys of WHY? aren't exactly reinventing the wheel here. Luckily for the band (and its fans), *Alopecia* was a fine record and the WHY? formula doesn't really require a whole lot of tinkering. Yoni Wolf's distinctive speak-singing and penchant for introspective lyrics remains intact, as does the band's talent for ramshackle pop melodies. *Eskimo Snow* is perhaps a bit more melancholy than past WHY? offerings—when Wolf cries "Mom, am I failing or worse?" on "The Blackest Purse," his anguish is palpable. Yet no matter how tortured the lyrics may be, the swirling vibraphone melodies of "January Twenty Something" and "Into the Shadow of My Embrace" could perk up even the mopeiest of fanboys. *Shawn Reynaldo*

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## ARTISTS TO WATCH



PHOTO TK

## JOY ORBISON

South London, U.K.



"Cool" uncles have always gotten kids into all kinds of wonderful mischief, but 22-year-old Peter O'Grady, better known as Joy Orbison, was especially blessed—he credits an uncle with introducing him to jungle and U.K. garage long before he could ever hit the clubs. At the age of 13 he took up DJing and eventually moved into production, beginning with Fruity Loops-crafted 8-bar grime loops before shifting into headier territory that combined his love of house, disco, and dubstep with the atmospheric fuzz of bands like My Bloody Valentine, Josef K, and The Beach Boys. His soon-to-be-released "Hyph Mngo" single has become *the* forward-thinking dubstep/2-step tune of 2009, and it will be quickly followed by more tunes on O'Grady's own Doldrums label, which he runs in tandem with partner Impey.

myspace.com/joyorbison



## CANYONS

Perth, Australia

In the deep Australian outback, deep chasms are being dug out and expertly filled with cosmic synth lines, syncopated bass and percussion work, and disco divas crying out into the night. The duo responsible for these sounds, Canyons, has been spreading their tunes via releases on Hole in the Sky and DFA, but will unveil their official debut album on Modular in early 2010. If future-disco classics "Fire Eyes" and "Dancing on Silk" are any indication, Canyons are poised to be the next decade's dancefloor darlings.

myspace.com/thecanyonsinfo



## DOUSTER

Lyon, France

Hugo Passaquin may be French, but his bread and butter resides below the equator in Buenos Aires. While studying abroad in Argentina, he immersed himself in *cumbia villera* and quickly found friends in the local Zizek collective. Honing his skills at underground parties and more recently during ZZK tours of the U.S. and Europe, he's found a niche where tropical and dancehall sounds collide with glitchy electro, hip-hop, and fidget house. Douster's already released music on Sound Pellegrino and Man Recordings, and his ZZK Records' debut, *Triassic Genesis*, is expected later this month.

myspace.com/douster



## MEMORY TAPES

New Jersey

Dayve Hawk is a Southern Jersey stay-at-home dad who also makes lo-fi new-wave disco that recalls the emotive pop sounds of New Order and Cocteau Twins. The Memory Tapes moniker is actually a combination of two projects which date back to Hawk's teenage years—Weird Tapes and Memory Cassette, the latter cooked up as a "feminine" alter-ego to the former. After releasing a series of tracks and remixes online, not to mention the official *Call & Response* EP as Memory Cassette, he has officially merged the two projects and dropped a full-length album as Memory Tapes, *Seek Magic*.

myspace.com/memorytapes



## THE xx

London, U.K.

Something like a revamped incarnation of vintage U.K. group Young Marble Giants, The xx applies drum machines and subtle electronic flourishes to their minimal post-punk ballads. While post-punk has long been a crowded field, what distinguishes this quartet is its soulful boy/girl vocals, delivered in a near-constant duet and heavily indebted to modern R&B—a notion solidified by the band's stellar covers of pop divas Aaliyah and Kyla. The xx's self-titled debut album comes out in October on Young Turks/XL.

myspace.com/thexx

## GUEST REVIEWS: JACQUES RENAULT

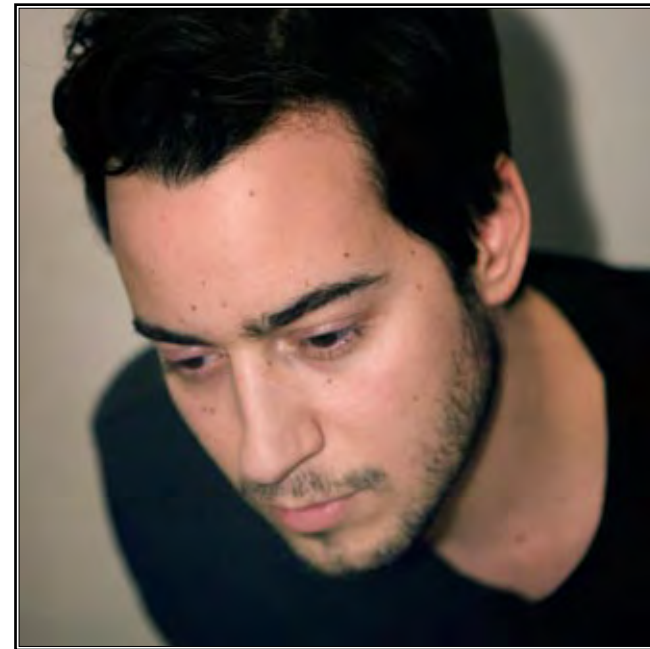


PHOTO: EMILY WROE

The NYC underground disco scene is packed with pretenders to the throne, but Jacques Renault just might be king of the mountain. Working both as a solo artist and as one half of ultra-fashionable duo Runaway, the prolific DJ and producer continues to unleash a steady stream of remixes, edits, and original tracks on labels like I'm a Cliché, Rekids, Chinatown, Italians Do It Better, Editions Disco, Wurst Edits, and, of course, DFA. He recently launched his own label, On the Prowl, with Runaway partner Marcos Cabral and he's also been keeping busy producing tracks for Brooklyn post-punkers (and recent Warp signees) The Hundred in the Hands. Renault recently found time in his hectic schedule to tell us about some of his favorite new house and disco jams. [myspace.com/jacquesrenault](http://myspace.com/jacquesrenault)

BRINTON MCKAY  
"SPINDLE"

Mystery Meat/UK/12

New label alert! "Spindle," from the mysterious Brinton McKay, is a true filter disco anthem. Entertaining and very creative, the track is constantly moving and grabbing your attention with loopy hooks and just a touch of acid. On the flip we have "Warlord Control," which gives a nod to the Italo world.

THE JUAN MACLEAN  
"HAPPY HOUSE REMIXES"

DFA/US/12

"Happy House" gets a new batch of remixes and it's quite the package. Chateau Flight delivers a remix filled with subtle and smart changes, while Lazaro Casanova's remix is a bongo-filled tribal adventure with an epic piano breakdown. VHS or Beta goes for a NYC disco groove, and Will Saul, Mike Monday, Paul Woolford, and Matthew Dear all put their stamp on it, too.

JACOB KORN  
"I LIKE THE SUN  
(BUT NOT ON LEDS)"

Running Back/GER/12

Label head Gerd Janson has been releasing upfront music for years now, and this release is no different. The feel-good riffs and solid bassline of "I Like the Sun" give way to the classic house claps and pads of "Selene." If that wasn't enough, Prins Thomas adds his own diskomiks of "I Like the Sun" to make this 12" an essential for my bag.

6TH BOROUGH PROJECT  
"MCLOVIN"

Permanent Vacation/GER/12

The 6th Borough Project has done it again. With the success of their Instruments of Rapture label, this crew has produced countless solid reworks of artists from the past and present. "McLovin" has a groove we all "wanna love," and I certainly do, with its classic disco guitar and smooth Rhodes. Not to be missed.

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## IN THE STUDIO: TRAXX

A CHICAGO HOUSE FIEND TAKES A DECIDEDLY OLD-SCHOOL APPROACH TO MAKING JAKBEAT.

Drawing inspiration from the halcyon days of juice bars, loft parties, and the earliest glimpses of the Chicago rave scene, Melvin Oliphant's skewed vision of the past is a creative force unto itself. Recording under aliases such as Traxx, X2, and Saturn V, Oliphant's lo-fi production style can, within the space of a single track, flirt with jackhammering industrial noise, brittle string melancholy, and acidic bassline repetition—as if all the disparate sounds of 1988 joined forces. Oliphant calls the sound 'jakbeat,' and along with Tadd Mullinix, D'Marc Cantu, Beau Wanzer, and a few other like-minded producers, they've carved out a sort of alternate reality for house music. It's definitely not the glossy sound we've come to expect from Chicago, but rather a messy and chaotic space in between. Below, Oliphant tell us how he gets the raw sound with a relatively simple set-up.

### **XL88R: ARE YOU USING A COMPUTER AT ALL WHILE RECORDING?**

Melvin Oliphant: Only at the final, final stage... after I've recorded to a Denon cassette tape. I just run it from a [Behringer] mixer to the cassette deck to the computer, so you're getting the tape noise. And I don't use compression after that—all I do is normalize so I can get the dirtiness to come out.

### **SO EVERYTHING BEFORE THE COMPUTER IS ANALOG?**

Yeah. For example, I use one of the first sequencers from the '80s. It's called an Alesis MMT-8. I do have some VSTs in my studio, like the [Korg] MS20. But I'll tell you right now that basically the entire album, *Faith*, was done with analog gear: Roland synthesizers like the SH-101, a Juno 106, and the TR-707 and 505 drum machines. Or I've got a Korg Poly 800 and this German acid synth, the [Acidlab] BassLine. The thing is, I did use that MS20 VST on the track "Violent Epoch," but you wouldn't be able to tell! That's the whole point. I'd rather allow for more of the human part, the old machinery that gave out that certain signal; that certain frequency. So if you listen to "Violent Epoch," and not the bassline but this weird sound that comes in... that's the VST. And I really don't think you can tell.

### **TRUE, EVERYTHING AROUND IT SOUNDS SO RAW.**

And that's a choice that you can make, even if it's a choice that not everyone seems to realize they have. For me, I just feel better using these machines because I have to work. I have to actually do something. Lift my fingers up and move around and get the exercise. And you know what? A lot of people making the music right now could stand to do the

same. Do some work! Step up your game. I don't want to hear that shit anymore—half these people aren't doing anything. They're just talking and bull-jiving. What happened to being diverse? What happened to taking real risks? Because to me, these people—and they know who they are—they're saying, "I want to make my money by being safe." If you're making the music, let me see you actually do it!

### **IS THERE A CONNECTION BETWEEN "DOING WORK," LIKE PHYSICALLY MOVING, AND TAKING RISKS AS A PRODUCER?**

Absolutely.

### **IN THAT RESPECT, YOU'RE PROBABLY ONE OF THE MOST PHYSICALLY ACTIVE DJS OUT THERE.**

Yes, although let me make this point, if I can: I am not a DJ, I'm a disk jock. There's a big difference there. I am not your request. What a disc jock is supposed to be is a medicine man, a shaman. And I don't give people what they want; I give them what they need.

### **DO PEOPLE NEED TO HEAR SOME OF THE PAST AGAIN?**

Well, it's like... my beat patterns always come from myself, but I do listen to the old tracks and I do try to take those old patterns into a different place. But just so you understand this: It is not copycatting to take those ideas and go somewhere else with them. It comes from this whole jack thing, spelled j-a-c-k. It's an idea that's made from the house music concept, but not in a way to rehash what we already know. And the thing is it's not like I've been producing for like 20 years. I started in 2000, and I'll be completely honest with you—I'm not a pro. But I do know enough to know what I don't want things to sound like.

### **OVERPRODUCED?**

Yes, and you get a thousand claps for that. I'm not sure how to say this, but... I'm taking from inside of the machine, and working from the inside backwards. I don't know if you know what I mean. But I'm not going by the laws of physical gravity. I'm going by the alternative.

Traxx's *Faith* is out now on Nation. [jak-nation.com](http://jak-nation.com)



IN TRAXX'S STUDIO, ALESIS MMT-8 SEQUENCER, ROLAND TR-505, ROLAND JUNO-106 SYNTH





## ARTIST TIPS: LUSINE

Jeff McIlwain (a.k.a. Lusine) is often cited as one of the most versatile producers working in electronic music, and for good reason—who else can make Detroit techno and IDM as consistently well as movie soundtracks? In September, McIlwain returned to Ghostly International for his first album in four years, *A Certain Distance*, his most accessible effort to date. Featuring the vocals of Vilja Larjosto on several tracks, including the single "Two Dots," the record's poppiness is quite a change from the icy ambient whirs of 2007's *Language Barrier*. Here, Lusine drops a few tips on novice producers by addressing sample sources and the art of knowing when to say when. *Thomas Rees*

[myspace.com/lusinespace](http://myspace.com/lusinespace)

### 1. GET YOUR SOUND SOURCES FROM UNUSUAL PLACES.

If you're basing all of your sounds on the same sample banks or plug-ins/synths, your music might tend to sound the same. Using field recordings is a great way to build interesting sound banks. I named the third track on my album "Tin Hat" because the initial source was recorded at one of my favorite bars in Seattle, The Tin Hat. I threw this field recording through a vocoder to match the key of the rest of the track.

### 2. NOT EVERYTHING CAN BE FIXED WITH EQ.

If something just doesn't sound right in the mix, isolate each channel and figure out which track isn't working. EQing is great to isolate frequencies, but sometimes it's a matter of replacing a sound or re-sequencing a track. A few of my tracks have vocals, which can get complicated if there's a lot going on in the background. I realized with "Two Dots" it wasn't really a matter of tweaking the vocals or the backing tracks, but I had to re-sequence a lot of the tracks to make the vocals, beat, and synth lines not crowd each other out.

### 3. DON'T WORRY ABOUT GETTING THE MOST EXPENSIVE GEAR.

A \$2000 soundcard, \$5000 synthesizer, or collection of high-end plug-ins is not going to fix your crappy track. And it's not going to make your amazingly spontaneous and beautiful track sound a million times better; it's what you do with your equipment that counts. I've got a few favorite pieces of gear that I know inside and out. If you know your equipment, then you can focus more on your music.

### 4. LEAVE ANY PRE-MASTERING UNTIL THE END.

Work more on making the tracks sound better together musically before applying an overall limiter (unless compression is being used as an effect). I will make a pre-master of my music in the end, but I usually give the mastering engineer an unmastered copy. If you've been relying on your master channel during production, you might actually be disappointed with how your unmastered copy ends up sounding in the frequency range and dynamics. And the engineers usually have a lot better gear for giving the bass some oomph and the track better overall clarity.

### 5. COMMIT IT TO TAPE (SO TO SPEAK).

Don't constantly explore your options if something feels right. I have often lost a bit of the magic by continually re-working a track. Sometimes leaving it for a few days and coming back to it can really help to clue you in on how much you're feeling it. Conversely, if it just doesn't sound right, don't be afraid to totally scrap what you've been doing and approach it like a remix. The track "Gravity" was originally intended to be something totally different, but after months of toiling, I decided to start from scratch and take it in a totally new direction.



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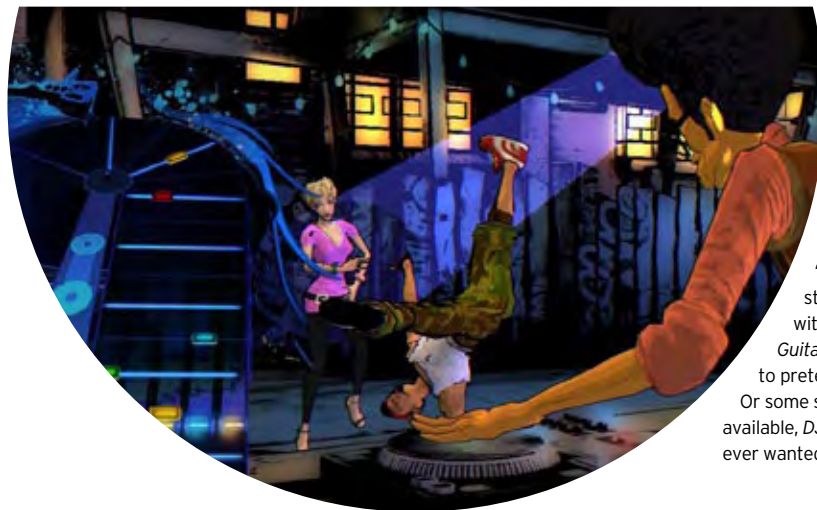
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## DJ HERO

ACTIVISION; XBOX 360, PS3, WII



After five years of rock 'n' roll excess, the *Hero* brand finally comes to the clubs (or more likely, your living room) with *DJ Hero*, *Guitar Hero*'s turntable-based cousin. With a soundtrack overseen by none other than DJ Shadow, the game mashes together over 100 individual tracks from the likes of Grandmaster Flash, Nirvana, Public Enemy and... Bel Biv DeVoe (!), daring you to scratch, mix, and reeeewiiiiind your way to DJ superstardom via the included turntable controller, which operates similarly to the previous color-coded guitar controller. There is also a Renegade Edition that includes exclusive tracks from both Jay-Z and Eminem, who served as "consultants," as well as a limited-edition white controller and turntable stand. Coordinating your button presses, crossfades, and scratches with what is happening on screen can at first be a little daunting, but, like *Guitar Hero*, it's easy to pick up and once you really get rolling, it's hard not to pretend you're Paul Oakenfold rockin' a sea of sexiness in Copenhagen. Or some shit. With online DJ battles, and even a few guitar-vs.-turntable battles available, *DJ Hero* offers something for every music fan and clubland head that ever wanted to step behind the wheels of steel. *Ryan Rayhill*

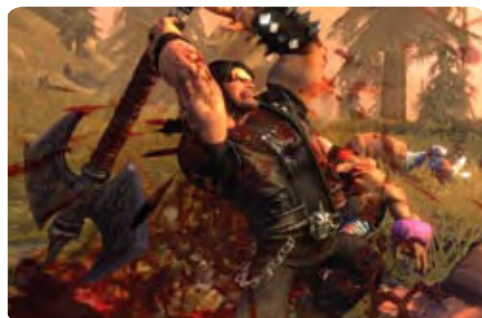
## SCRIBBLE JAM



Ever wanted to play a game where you could make a dragon chase a baby? Throw a sink at a bee? Stomp zombies with a dinosaur? Well, it's all possible in *Scribblenauts* (Warner Bros.; DS)! Essentially a puzzle game, *Scribblenauts* puts you in control of an adventurer, Maxwell, as he attempts to collect "starites." But how you accomplish this is really the kicker—by writing in the name of almost any object you can think of (no, really), you can produce that item in the game, which could result in any number of scenarios in which to accomplish your goal. A truly innovative title that deserves its many "best in show" awards from this year's E3. *RR*

## LIKE A ROCK

If your idea of high art is anything by Boris Vallejo, and you put on "Close My Eyes Forever" when you're feeling romantic, then brother, have we got the game for you! *Brutal Legend* (EA; Xbox 360, PS3) stars Jack Black as the best roadie in the world (for the worst band in the world) who gets sucked into a fantasy world of swords, sorcery, and heavy fuckin' metal. Part hack-and-slash adventure and part squad-based strategy, *Brutal Legend*, features the voice talents of Ozzy, Lemmy, Rob Halford, and Tim Curry (?) as you headbang your way through one rock 'n' roll in-joke after another. *Wikkid! RR*



## ALL THE WAY LIVE



Akai's *APC40 Ableton Live Controller* (\$599), the first official Ableton Live hardware unit, is big news, and, by and large, the device delivers: The solid, rubberized construction is top-notch, and set-up took about 10 seconds. This is not a controller to play notes, but rather one meant to play and manipulate Live clips; a matrix of small rubber buttons correspond to Live's session view (with volume faders and master faders), while the right-hand side of the device has two banks of eight knobs and buttons for bank selection, tap tempo, shift, and nudge. The device is absolutely packed with controls—which can make things a bit cramped at times, but there's not a lot you can't do with the thing in terms of either production or performance. It's essentially a tangible version of the Live interface, which means far less mousing around than you're used to. And the best part? It just works. Amen to that. *Evan Shamoan*

The *microKORG XL Synthesizer* (\$750) is a beast unto itself, rather than an improved version of its predecessor, the original *microKorg*. Featuring the chunkiest, analog-heavy sounds imaginable and a much more intuitive dual knob-based interface, this lightweight synth packs one hell of a punch. The XL comes equipped with MMT (Multi Modeling Technology) found in Korg's high-end RADIAS synths alongside dual effects processors taken from the lauded KAOSS line, so any user can achieve cleaner, more dynamic sounds with the turn of a few knobs, if one should desire them. The *microKORG XL* comes loaded with a quality gooseneck microphone, large weighted keys, and six-pattern arpeggiation. Long and short, this is one of the finest neo-vintage hardware synths on the market, period. *Fred Miketa*

## MICROMANAGER



## WE CAN BE HEROES



As has become the yearly tradition, *Guitar Hero* and *Rock Band* have new titles out this month in an effort to keep the world of ersatz bands turning. *Guitar Hero 5* (Activision; Xbox 360, PS3, PS2, Wii) returns to last year's band format and adds the ability for each player to get loose on any available instrument (Four drummers? Sure!), new modes, and almost 100 new tracks. *Rock Band* this year takes a chance by focusing on just one band. However, that one band happens to be The Beatles, so they got that going for them. Which is nice. While remaining nearly identical to last year's game in terms of gameplay, *The Beatles Rock Band* (EA; Xbox 360, PS3, Wii) includes the Liverpool lads' signature instruments, their likenesses through various stages in their career, and, of course, nearly 50 of the band's best loved songs, with more promised via download later in the year. *RR*

## LOGIC PRO 9

MSRP: \$499; APPLE.COM

VERY FEW PRODUCTS ARE MARKETED SUITABLY; if more were, it would be easier to ignore shelf upon shelf of packages labeled Cheap Crap and Way Overpriced. With the release of Logic Pro 9, however, Apple has managed to put out a perfectly named item, as this \$499 suite is the logical choice for producers wanting professional capabilities at an increasingly impressive features-to-price ratio. Unlike many upgrades that force you to navigate new GUIs before testing the goodies, Logic Pro 9 emphasizes functions over form (meaning it's all still grey with main cosmetic tweaks to floating/context menus). Logic Pro 9 eases both the learning curve and the clock (as well as the clock speed, as CPU usage/spikes are reduced). Whether selecting a track to bounce in place (printing head-to-tail FX and automation), selectively importing content/settings of other Logic tracks, exporting EXS instruments, or just creatively abusing sounds (though Varispeed, Speed Fades, Quantize, and more makes that external sampler kind of pointless), Pro 9 is streamlined in ways that benefit edition 8 users and fresh converts alike. Rest assured, workflow is in no way disrupted. Appropriately, many of the new benefits are built on and around Flex Time. Just a few clicks and a drag of the mouse eases a track in time or rends it way out there. Further tone-mangling is possible in the new Amp Designer/Pedalboard plug-ins, which do appear to chomp fewer resources than Guitar Rig,



albeit in a format more familiar to AmpliTube customers than those who like their effects racked. Project studios requiring more than GarageBand but living on more of a budget can enjoy the \$199 Logic Express 9, though the stripped-down version lacks surround-sound mixing, comprehensive convolution reverb impulses, the extensive loop/sound library, live performance utilities, audio for video production tools, and conversion tools.

Like several recent Apple products—the iPhone 3GS, Snow Leopard—Logic Pro 9 is two-thirds about refining an effectively established system so that evolution is just as appreciated as revolution. But then there's that one innovation—in this case Flex Time—and suddenly your laptop is rejuvenated into a fount of gushing awesomeness. *Tony Ware*



## NATIVE INSTRUMENTS MASCHINE PRODUCTION PACKAGE

MSRP: \$699; NATIVE-INSTRUMENTS.COM



**FOR DECADES, AKAI'S MPC SERIES DOMINATED THE WORLD OF PAD-BASED BEAT PRODUCTION.** Recently, however, manufacturers (Akai included) have created ever-improving MIDI controllers that essentially emulate the functionality of the MPC with the attached computer meant to do all of the dirty work. Now, Native Instruments has created a hardware/software combination that attempts to combine the hands-on, head-nod appeal of beat machine hardware with customized software, meant for the precise edits and serious timeline sequencing best dealt with by a computer and monitor. Believe: Maschine makes laying down thumpers every bit as organic as it is on the MPC. The unit truly functions like an instrument, with live recording, sample manipulation, and effects all built into an easy, efficient workflow. While other hardware/software combos can ultimately get the same job done, never has it been so intuitive and required so little wrist-/soul-crushing

mousing around. The hardware is great, with extremely responsive pads and sturdy, rubberized knobs and buttons. It comes with a massive library of sounds, and all the functions that MPC devotees could never go without (like Note Repeat and Swing). You can sample directly into the software, chop up loops, and layer some classy tempo-synced effects—all without touching your mouse. And if you don't like dropping your science live, there's even a step-sequencing mode, as found in many older drum machines. Maschine can be run either as a stand-alone app or as a plug-in, depending on how you like to work. The lack of support for MP3 and REX files is annoying (hopefully fixed soon via software updates), and the price is a long way from free. But if you're sick of getting eyestrain from staring at your monitor all damn night—yet unwilling to let go of the creature comforts your computer provides—Maschine is a brilliant, inspiring creative tool. *ES*

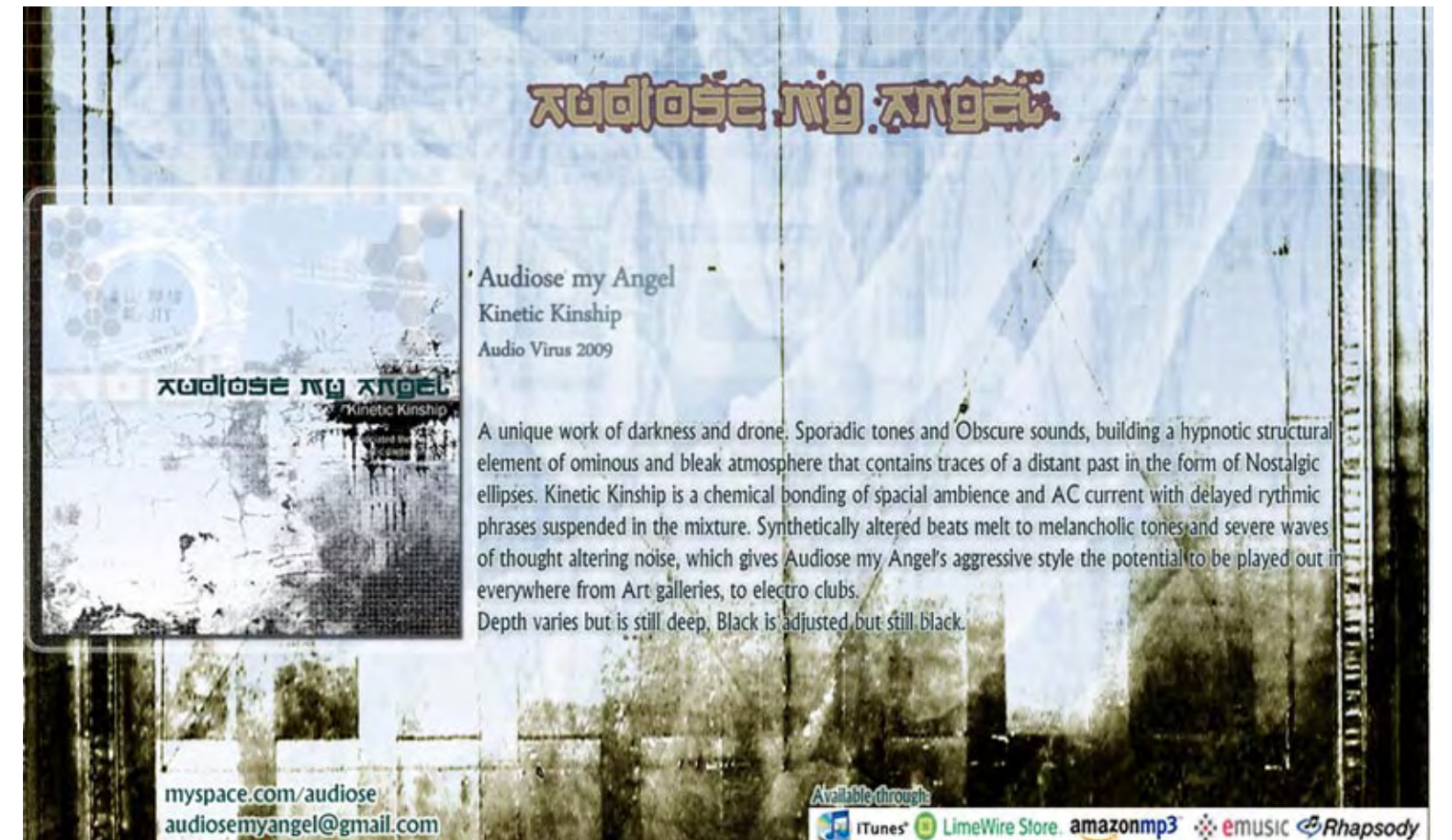
### TALK DEMONIC



While we may be nearly 20 years removed from the heyday of 2D action games like *Contra* or *Ghosts 'N Goblins*, *Muramasa: The Demon Blade* manages to make everything old new again with trippy Japanese-folklore-meets-anime-style visuals and slick, old-school gameplay. As one of two fugitive ninja, you must traverse old Nippon in an effort to uncover the power of the fabled Demon Blades, swords said to bring madness about the land. An epic soundtrack that can go from traditional *koto/taiko* music to jaunty jazz to Yngwie Malmsteen-style shredding in a matter of moments sets the tone as you collect power-ups, battle relentless waves of netherworld filth, and scale gargantuan bosses (we really mean it—one guy's toe is bigger than your entire body in one instance). Like the games of yore, *Muramasa* is extremely easy to pick up but extremely difficult to muscle through. While the difficulty is adjustable, expect to die. A lot. With more Japanese flavor than your local *takoyaki* house, *Muramasa* is simply stunning to behold, a hell of a lot of fun, and definitely one of the coolest games ever to grace the Wii. *RR*

### COMIC RELIEF

Following the Secret War and Civil War storylines straight out of the funnybooks, *Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2* (Activision; Xbox 360, PS3, PS2, Wii, DS, PSP) pits hero against hero after an unfortunate incident causes heavy civilian casualties, forcing the government to instill a "Superhuman Registration Act," which not everyone is down for. Players control either a Pro-Registration team (led by Iron Man) or Anti-Registration Team (led by Captain America) in an effort to quell the other side. But since we are talking about guys like the Hulk, Wolverine, and Deadpool here, things tend to get ugly. And with the ability for characters to "fuse" powers into one deadly super-move, they also get awesome! *RR*



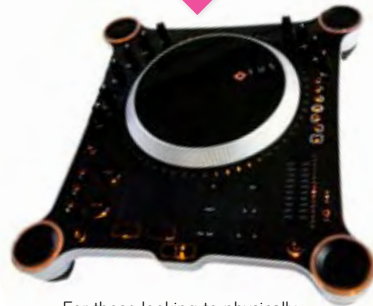


For those of you who have acquired the recently cheaper and slimmed-down, sexy version of the PS3 (The Slim, as it's known), what better way to christen your new unit than with the most badass and best-looking adventure title of the year? *Uncharted 2: Among Thieves* (Sony, PS3) follows the tale of Indy-esque treasure-hunter Nathan Drake as he hunts down the sunken treasure of Marco Polo. Sadly for him, Nathan isn't the only cat out there looking for a little nip, as he must out-gun, out-climb, and out-think a power-hungry warlord who also has designs on the booty. Dark, clever, and truly exhilarating to behold, *Among Thieves* will steal your heart. Or your wallet. We get the two confused... *RR*



THIEVES LIKE US

SCRATCH HAPPY



For those looking to physically replicate the process of DJing with a minimal amount of hardware, **EKS' Otus MIDI Turntable Emulator** (\$899) is one of the best answers out there. Essentially two turntables and a mixer built in one roughly 15" x 13" device, the Otus hooks up to your laptop and allows for all manner of record manipulation, cross-fading, and effect-layering. It will be familiar to users of the Pioneer CDJ-1000 in terms of layout, but this thing is MIDI-based—meaning the user can assign mixer controls to whatever functions they desire, making it extremely versatile for those who like to mix live performance with their DJ sets. It's very well built, and sits comfortably atop any in-club DJ set-up thanks to its extended rubber feet. *ES*

RUN FOR THE BORDER



Part *Halo* and part *World of Warcraft*, **Borderlands 2** (2K; Xbox 360, PS3) introduces us to a savage world of mutants, mad loot, and literally millions of deadly weapon combinations. As one of four distinct characters, you and your team must traverse the terrain of a distant planet, Pandora, seeking long-lost alien technology in an attempt to flee the barren, inhospitable rock. Unfortunately, the lawless maniacs left behind after most of humanity took a powder would rather see you splattered against the bottom of a gorge. The game's constantly changing maps and firearms, along with co-op play, ensure you'll be stuck here for quite some time. And loving every second of it. *RR*

BATMAN: ARKHAM ASYLUM

EIDOS; XBOX 360, PS3

**DESPITE LITTLE CRITICAL ACCLAIM AND A WEAK BOX-OFFICE** for his last film, Batman remains a cult favorite (somehow) among a small group of fringe enthusiasts, 70-plus years after... Awww, who are we kidding?! The world never tires of the Bat! Providing perhaps more fan service than any other Batman game before it, this month's *Batman: Arkham Asylum* not only follows the comic canon faithfully but also features the famed voice work of Kevin Conroy and Mark Hamill, who have played the animated Dark Knight and Joker respectively since 1992. Up until now, most Batman titles have been straightforward beat-em-ups, but *Arkham Asylum* takes things in a direction more fitting Chris Nolan's recent films than anything before it. Relying on equal parts CSI-like detective work, stealthy subterfuge, and bone-crunching fist-to-face action, this Batman takes on foes both classic (Joker, Penguin) and obscure (Killer Moth, Ratcatcher) as they overrun the notorious nuthouse for the criminally insane. The gameplay is fluid and visceral, and, mild camera issues aside, fans of the character's most dark, twisted tales will welcome the grimy visuals and violent tone (Kidnapping! electric chairs! chemical explosions!). While the inmates definitely run this asylum, the Bat himself has never seemed so in charge as he does here. *RR*

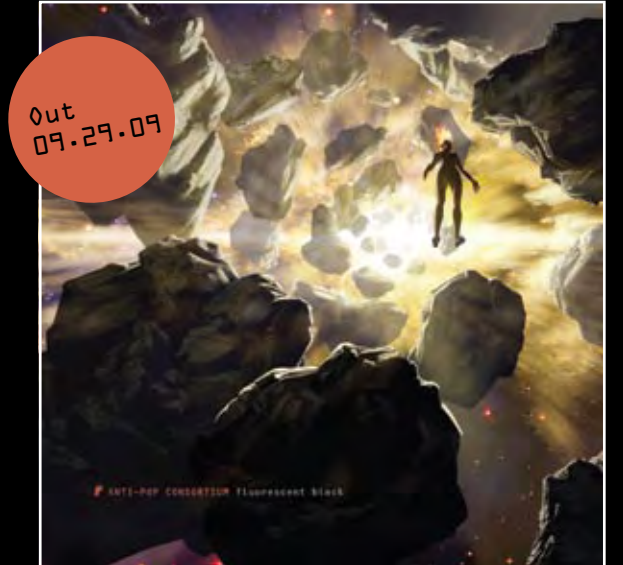


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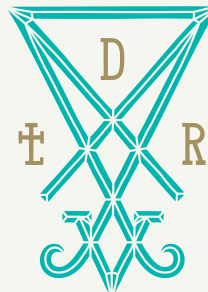
'A cast-iron groove-rock quintet whose mix of frazzle and funk gives off an instantaneous contact high. Superfly and superfun.'

Spin



www.theheavy.co.uk





✦ AS ABOVE SO BELOW ✦

## VIS-ED Dust La Røck

BALANCING GOOD AND EVIL WITH FOOL'S GOLD'S  
DON OF THE DARKSIDE.

**Left:**  
Dust La Rock exclusive  
for *XLR8R*, 2009

I don't remember how I first met Dust La Rock, but I do remember last summer. I shared a backyard with a member of his Brooklyn BMX gang and at the end of long sweltering days, I often ended up sharing a beer or three with the quick-witted graphic powerhouse while he attempted to sell me pieces of his techstep drum & bass collection. (I didn't buy any.)

Dusty (real name: Josh Prince) has an interesting history indeed. Raised in New Jersey, he is a veteran of Christian private school, drug dealing, and '90s hip-hop—his first job upon moving to NYC was a modeling gig for streetwear giant Ecko Unlimited. Ecko realized the budding talent of this wise-cracking ne'er-do-well, and offered him a job as a graphic designer despite his lack of experience. He passed the trial by fire, and soon Dust's work could be seen all around town, from designing identities for U.K. drum & bass DJ A-Sides' Eastside imprint and British street music mag *ATM* to a series of eye-catching and radically different club flyers for local promoter Roxy Cottontail. Roxy eventually introduced Dust to Nick Catchdubs, and he was soon invited to do all of the art for the now club-storming Fool's Gold label.

With a myriad of record covers under his belt (from The Orb to Kid Sister), plus crazy items like an absinthe spoon (with high-end NYC jeweler Bijules) and a vinyl polar bear toy (with A-Trak and Kid Robot), this 32-year-old workaholic has certainly come a long way from selling acid and cleaning oil tanks in the suburbs. Over fish and chips at Brooklyn's Dumont restaurant, Mr. La Rock and I talked about Rosicrucians, Throbbing Gristle, and his extensive collection of vintage Adidas.

[dustiarock.com](http://dustiarock.com)

WORDS [VIVIAN HOST](#)  
IMAGES [DUST LA ROCK](#)





From left:  
Trackademicks' "Enjoy  
What You Do," 2009; Kid  
Sister ft. Kanye West's  
"Pro Nails," 2007



**Where does the name Dust La Rock come from?**

My fondness for PCP and a nod to the golden age of hip-hop.

**What made you decide to become a graphic designer?**

After narrowly escaping a 20-year prison sentence for the solicitation of narcotics, I somehow found myself working in the fashion industry. After a couple years spent learning the ropes, it was a natural progression for me to make the transition from product design to graphic design/illustration. Basically, drawing shit was the only thing I was good at.

**What is the worst job you've ever had?**

I used to work for a contractor at an oil refinery in Jersey. My job was to clean the interior of those giant white circular oil tanks. Some of them had floating roofs, so when they were empty you had to build 12 pillars of 85-pound wooden blocks,

stacked six high, so you wouldn't get crushed if the roof dropped whilst cleaning up crude oil with a three-foot firehose. Nasty job, especially on mushrooms.

**Who are your style icons?**

Serge Gainsbourg, Jason Schwartzman's character in *The Darjeeling Limited*, and Dave 1 from Chromeo.

**Do you collect anything besides records?**

I collect vintage Adidas, specifically Olympic sweatshirts, jackets, and tracksuits. I used to wear it. Now that I'm becoming a bit more mature, I tend to wear black a lot, but maybe for Halloween I'll bust some out. My family has always had a lot of weapons and they've come down to me. I definitely have a gun or two that was my father's. It's documented that my mom's uncle was the last man standing in a battle on Iwo Jima during WWII. The American soldiers were going through bayoneting the dead and he jumped up and had to

prove to them that he was an American soldier. So he had a Japanese officer's sword, and I have that. I also have random weird fucking knives that my grandfather and father collected, so I always have a knife on me at all times. And books. It's my job, sort of, so I have a pretty large library.

**Where did the title of your recent art show, *Best of the Beast* (at NYC's Christopher Henry Gallery), come from?**

San Francisco DJ Vin Sol came up with it, actually. He did two parties in S.F. with that name; I did the flyers for them, and one of the flyers was this Gila monster hand [that ended up in my show]. I thought it was just the best name in the world, and some of the content of the show has a devilish aspect. Let's face it, the devil is more interesting than God... or all the kind of things that go along with the name, the idea, or the connotations.



Above:  
"In His Service"  
(Best of the Beast), 2009





**Tell us a bit about the symbolism of some of the art in the show.**

A lot of the symbolism is related to Rosicrucianism [a society of German mystics]. There's some straight-up Satanic shit—there, I said it; the mini-crest I did that you can see on the bottom of the prints was based off a Nazi mystic society logo. They had this whole division that was devoted to *Raiders of the Lost Ark*-type shit. They didn't really go in search of the Ark, but they were out there searching that kind of stuff out.

**I think it's interesting how much dark music, art, and philosophy you're into as a person and the fact that you work at Fool's Gold, which I always think of as a really fun, party-time label.**

Yes, that is definitely an ongoing struggle in my mind. It tends to make me a Negative Nancy sometimes, but then I think about the kids and how they want to dance. Personally, I'm trying to shy away from the shinier stuff. For my recent art show, I don't think people were expecting what the content



was. If I would have given them Fool's Gold-type stuff, it would have been cool and maybe a bit more widely accepted, but it wouldn't have been that fun.

**Following your Twitter feed, it's obvious you are massively into music. Name five things you've listened to this week.**

Throbbing Gristle "Hot on the Heels of Love (Ratcliffe Remix)." The Rolling Stones "Paint It Black." Koop "Summer Sun." Revolting Cocks "Crackin' Up." Grand Wizard Theodore "Subway Theme."

**Opposite:**  
"Tetragrammaton"  
(Best of the Beast), 2009

**Above:**  
"The Golden Mean"  
(Best of the Beast), 2009





This page:  
Grateful Bear  
(Dust La Rock x A-Trak x Kid Robot), 2009

**How did making the Grateful Bear with A-Trak and Kid Robot come about?**

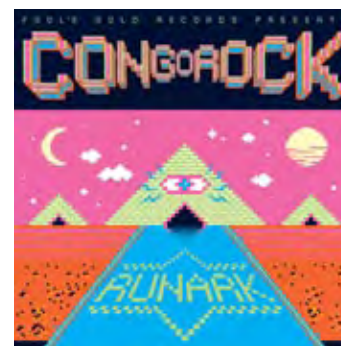
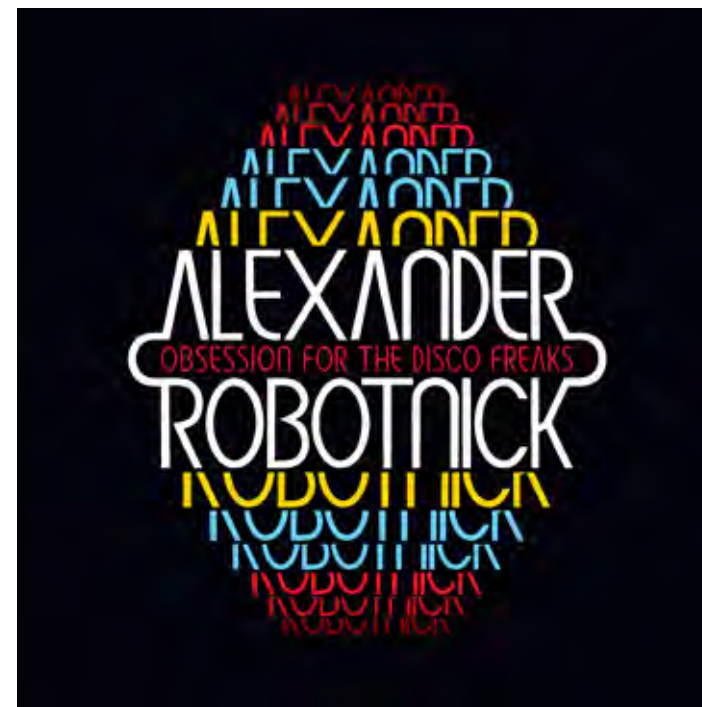
The bear is originally from Alain's [A-Trak's] old website. The bear is just a character that I came up with and he proposed that we turn it into a toy. It took us two years to get it right—you know, tweaking the arm or the leg to certain infinitesimal degrees and being busy with other shit. I remember Dave [from Chromeo, one of the Fool's Gold owners] called me up and was like, "Duster, is that a hit of acid on the bear's tongue?" And I was like, "Yeah, is that a problem?" And he said, "No, just wondering." You know, I always got to add my own twist to it. Grateful Bear's got a little strut to him, *Shakedown Street*-style.

**Who are some of your less obvious design references?**

There are a couple Japanese artists from the '60s or '70s that were the Japanese counterparts to Peter Max or Milton Glaser; putting their own Japanese twist on it and just really turning things out. It was that whole post-WWII era and this explosion of creativity after things being so black and white somehow. Artists like Keiichi Tanaami and Tadanori Yokoo.

**What are some of your biggest inspirations of 2009?**

Sir Peter Blake, Faith No More reuniting, golden apples, severed fingers, Bruegel the Elder, chenille, twill, chainstitch, Jameson whiskey, and Rosicrucianism.



Above:  
Alexander Robotnick's "Obsession for the Disco Freaks"; Laidback Luke & A-Trak's "Shake It Down," 2009; Congo Rock's "Runark," 2009; DJ Gant-Man's "Juke That Girl", 2009

**What is your favorite fashion look?**

Vintage U.K. mod.

**Who is your favorite hip-hop artist of all time?**

Smif-n-Wessun.

**What is your favorite item of clothing that you own?**

My vintage Pop Will Eat Itself tour shirt.

**Your work sometimes gets compared to that of So-Me or Parra. What do you make of that?**

To appropriate a quote of Dali's: "Each morning when I awake, I experience again a supreme pleasure—that of being Dust La Rock."

**Where in the world would you most like to go?**

That really big fucking room where all the esoteric secrets of the universe are kept.



# fear of music

WHY PEOPLE GET ROTHKO BUT DON'T GET STOCKHAUSEN



**AUTHOR DAVID STUBBS** contributed to the influential fanzine *Monitor* before writing for *Melody Maker*. He is also a former reviews editor of *The Wire* and has written books on Jimi Hendrix, Eminem, and Ace Records. His latest polemic, *Fear of Music* (O Books; \$19.95), considers—to quote the suffix—“why people get Rothko but don’t get Stockhausen.” Why, asks Stubbs, do the same people who “flock from miles around to mill in the presence of abstract art run screaming from ‘abstract music?’” *David Hemingway*

**XLR8R: You touch upon this in the final chapter of *Fear of Music*, but is experimental music simply more difficult to ignore than experimental visual art, in terms of trauma/pain?**

David Stubbs: Yes. The lack of “earlids” is one problem. Art, even enormous works, only occupies a limited space within your field of vision, whereas music occupies all of your field of hearing. You can cut out art in a blink of an eye or simply turn your head. Alternatively, imagine if Munch’s “The Scream” were conveyed as an audible, prolonged cry of anguish, rather than merely a silent evocation on canvas—how soon would that clear the gallery?

**Do you envisage the book being read predominantly by fans of music or art?**

Ideally, I’d like it to be read by the “people” alluded to in the title—the great many who turned up to the Tate Modern to see the Rothko exhibition but whose experience of experimental music is either non-existent or limited to a horrified shudder and a [cry of] “that’s just noise, turn it off!” Fans of experimental music would probably be very familiar with both the music and the art talked about in the book.



**Where do, say, Autechre, Timbaland, and Public Enemy fit into your dichotomy? People seem to “get” them, to varying degrees, and their music could reasonably be described as “experimental.”**

True—and they are illustrations of how brutalist noise elements can find their way into popular, everyday listening, weave their way into the warp and grain of the modern soundtrack to life. Given the chance, people can get used to this stuff, however, “varying degrees” is the key phrase. That looped, sampled squeal that runs through PE’s “Rebel Without a Pause” is tolerable to many only because of the more traditional [hip-hop] rhythm riding shotgun alongside it. Conversely, Autechre have found commercial success harder to come by with their more extreme excursions into free-form neo-concrete, like *Draft 7.30*.

**What do you perceive as the purpose of the book?**

To highlight the existence of a vast swathe of 20th-/21st-century cultural activity that has been marginalized only in part because of its inherent difficulty, but also because it’s been harder to market. Also, to point out that that is one of its strengths—what I might call its resistance to bourgeois assimilation, if I were the sort of person who talked like that.

**I suspect you raise as many questions as you provide answers in the book. Succinctly, why do people get Rothko but don’t get Stockhausen?**

Well, if you’re only into culture out of a sense of self-affirmation, to show to yourself that you’re the sort of person who attends such events, Rothko’s the easier option. You can be in and out of the Rothko room in 10 minutes, down in the museum café in 15. Sitting through a piece by Stockhausen, say, *Hymnen*, that’s a 100-minute slog. If you’re just there to be pretentious, you’ll be flushed out.

**If you could take over the Turbine Hall of the Tate Modern with a piece of music/sound art, what would it be and why?**

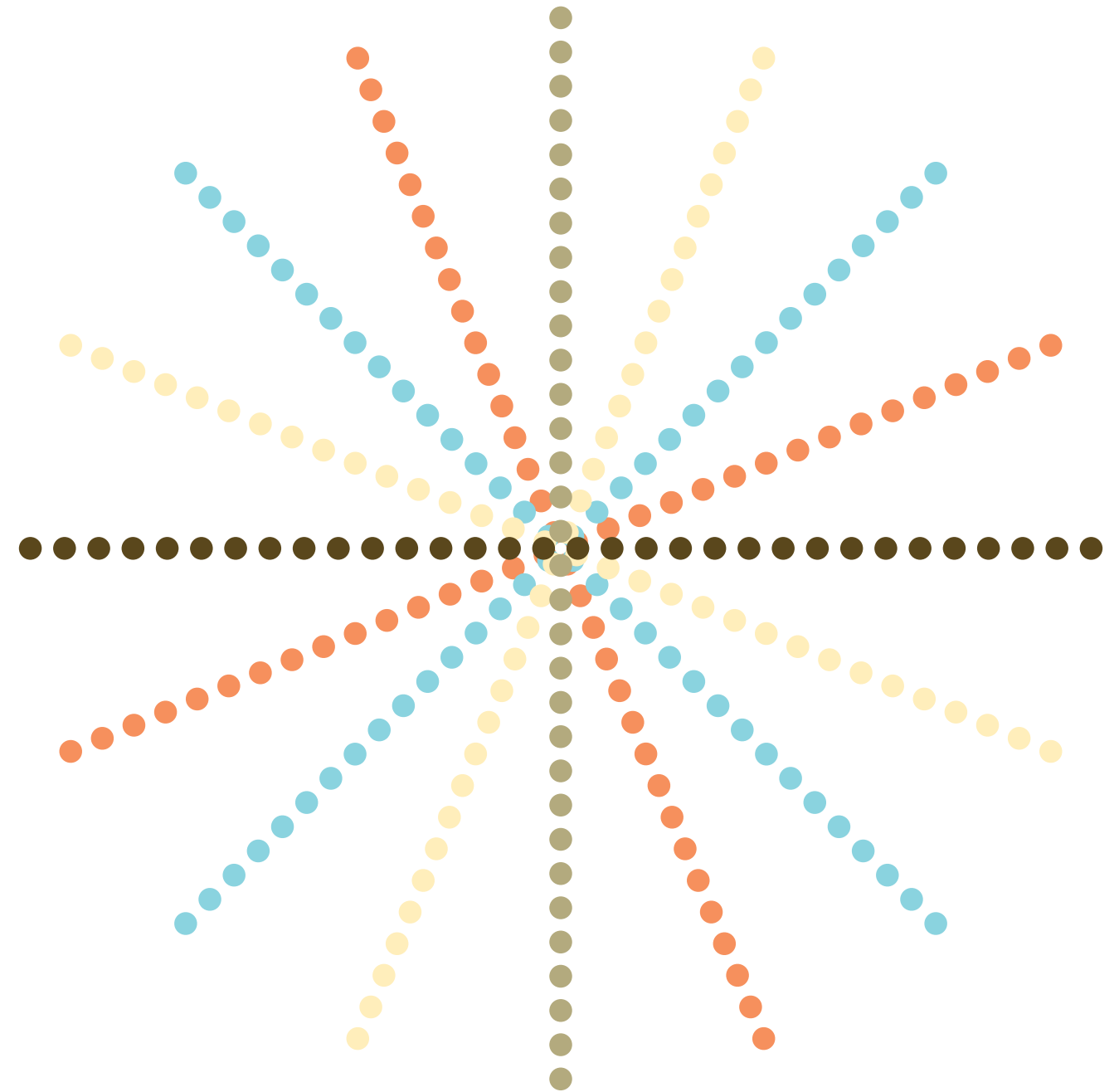
Perhaps something by Phillip Jeck or William Basinski—music which is beatless, vast in its implications, would fill the space, and make material points about the nature of organized sound (touching on memory, decay) but which is actually very seductive and accessible.

David Stubbs’ *Fear of Music: Why People Get Rothko But Don’t Get Stockhausen* is published by Zero Books. o-books.net

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